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CONRAD — THE WORLD OF IBN TUFAYL

# THE WORLD OF IBN TUFAYL

*Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*

EDITED BY

LAWRENCE I. CONRAD



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## PREFACE

This volume comprises most of the papers presented at a Wellcome Institute symposium on Ibn Ṭufayl and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, as well as several contributions by other scholars who were unable to attend or whose studies were solicited subsequently. The Arabic text referred to throughout this book is the second edition prepared by Léon Gauthier in 1936 and published by the Imprimerie catholique in Beirut. Lenn Goodman's very useful and well-annotated English translation, published in New York by Twayne in 1972, has also been consulted by some contributors.

Neither the symposium nor this volume would have been possible without the financial and administrative support of the Wellcome Institute. I am also grateful to all of the contributors, not only for their stimulating papers and comments during our discussions at the symposium, but also for their patience with my queries and suggestions, and with a series of delays to publication, many of them unavoidable. I would also like to express my gratitude to Meg Davies for preparing the index, and to some former colleagues at the American University of Beirut, where I taught *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* for several years. Discussions with Tarif Khalidi, James Malarkey, Nabil Matar, Wadad al-Qadi, Richard Scott, and Peter Shebayah contributed much to the shaping of my own understanding of the text, and James Malarkey's organization of an inter-disciplinary symposium on text analysis convinced me of the potential fruitfulness of devoting such a meeting to this text in particular.

So far as I am aware, this publication marks the first effort to study a work of medieval Arabic literature by drawing together the contributions of scholars approaching the text from many different methodological and disciplinary perspectives. While it may be true that Ibn Ṭufayl is unusually well suited for such discussion, I would suggest that since all books can be dealt with as "literature," there are practically boundless opportunities for similar endeavors, and of course, for further study of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* itself.

Lawrence I. Conrad





## INTRODUCTION

### THE WORLD OF IBN ṬUFAYL

Lawrence I. Conrad

(Wellcome Institute)

In 1671 Edward Pococke published his *editio princeps* of the text of an Arabic manuscript his father had purchased a journey to the Near East. The work was Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, and Pococke had been attracted to it because, as stated in his subtitle, he regarded it as a book "in which it is demonstrated by what means human reason can ascend from contemplation of the Inferior to knowledge of the Superior."<sup>1</sup> Such themes were destined to evoke a favorable response in England during the Enlightenment, and other scholars and literary figures were as taken by the book as Pococke had been. Whether Daniel Defoe modelled his *Robinson Crusoe* on Ibn Ṭufayl's work is uncertain,<sup>2</sup> but John Locke and others probably knew it and were influenced by it.<sup>3</sup> The book was translated into numerous European languages, first from the Latin rendering that had accompanied Pococke's Arabic text, and later from the Arabic itself; by 1900 the work could be read in Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, and Spanish.

Interest in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* among scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies in the West may be said to have received a decisive impetus with the contributions of Léon Gauthier, who in 1900 prepared a critical edition of

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<sup>1</sup> *Philosophus autodidactus, sive epistola Abi Jaafar, Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yok-dhan. In qua Ostenditur, quomodo ex Inferiorum contemplatione ad Superiorum notitiam Ratio humana ascendere possit* (Oxford: H. Hall, 1671). The exemplar used for this edition is now Ms. Pococke 263 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> This issue is discussed by Fedwa Malti-Douglas below, pp. 53–54.

<sup>3</sup> See G.A. Russell, "The Influence of *The Philosophus Autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke, and the Society of Friends," in *The "Arabick" Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by G.A. Russell (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 224–77. Russell's case is based largely on circumstantial evidence, but her argument does increase the probability of awareness of the text.

the Arabic text with a French translation;<sup>4</sup> he published a small monograph on Ibn Ṭufayl a few years later,<sup>5</sup> and in 1936 he returned to the text and published a revised second edition and French translation which still remain the best Arabic text and French version available for study.<sup>6</sup> More recent research has produced numerous worthwhile articles and one extended study in English,<sup>7</sup> and translation has continued apace. The text is now available in Czech, Italian, Persian, Polish, Russian, Turkish, and Urdu, and new versions in other languages are available; of these the copiously annotated English rendering by Lenn Goodman<sup>8</sup> and the excellent

<sup>4</sup>Léon Gauthier, *Hayy ben Yaqdhân, roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail*, texte arabe publié d'après un nouveau manuscrit avec les variantes des anciens textes et traduction française (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1900).

<sup>5</sup>Léon Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail: sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909).

<sup>6</sup>Léon Gauthier, *Hayy ben Yaqdhân: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofail*, texte arabe avec les variantes des manuscrits et de plusieurs éditions et traduction française, 2e édition, revue, augmentée et complètement remaniée (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936). This second edition of Gauthier's Arabic text has been used by all contributors to this volume, but is not what one might call a definitive text. To judge from his *apparatus criticus*, Gauthier's Ms. A, an Algiers exemplar in *maghribî* script and copied in 1180/1766 (see below, p. 270), bears a very good text; but at least two other Mss. related to the Algiers exemplar are now known (the Cairo and Damascus Mss. described below, p. 270), so the readings of this Ms. must be assessed against fuller evidence. There are also cases where Ibn Ṭufayl quotes from or alludes to extant works by such authors as Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111); these passages were not consulted by Gauthier, but are obviously relevant to the text of *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*.

One emendation required in light of such evidence concerns the name of Ḥayy's interlocutor, Absāl. In his own essay entitled *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, a tale of a very different kind (see the remarks by J.C. Bürgel, p. 130 below), Ibn Sīnā writes this unusual name "Absāl," but some of the printed editions and extant Mss. of Ibn Ṭufayl's work render it as "Asāl." J.C. Bürgel explains the discrepancy as reflecting Ibn Ṭufayl's desire to emphasize the difference between his "Asāl" and Ibn Sīnā's "Absāl;" see his "Ibn Ṭufayl and his *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*: a Turning Point in Arabic Philosophical Writing," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, edited by Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 844 n. 12. But there would seem to be no reason for Ibn Ṭufayl to emphasize the distinction with respect to this figure and not others (esp. the central figure of Ḥayy himself), or to highlight such differences while at the same time repeatedly stressing—in the same book—the affinities between his thinking and that of Ibn Sīnā (*Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 3–4, 14–15, 18, 20). And to such an end he is unlikely to have resorted to this tactic, which, as he must have known, would have suggested no more than a careless reading of Ibn Sīnā's Arabic. The forms "Asāl" and "Absāl" are almost identical orthographically, and in the absence of a convincing argument in favor of the former, the latter remains preferable. In some quarters such an argument has been pursued through attempts to find a meaning for the name Asāl in the Arabic root *s-ʿ-l*, "to ask," or "inquire;" but such efforts beg the question of whether the shift is to be expected in the first place.

<sup>7</sup>The study is Sami S. Hawi's *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism: a Philosophic Study of Ibn Ṭufayl's Hayy bin Yaqzān* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974). For the articles, see the select bibliography at the end of this book.

<sup>8</sup>Lenn Evan Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy ibn Yaqzān: a Philosophical Tale* (New York: Twayne, 1972). This translation, consulted by several contributors to this volume,

Dutch translation by Remke Kruk<sup>9</sup> are the most exemplary achievements. Apart from the *Thousand and One Nights* (and of course the Qur'ān), there is probably no work in all of classical Arabic literature that has been published so many times and translated into so many other languages.

The story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* has been received by the Muslim public with interest and enthusiasm since its author's own time, and an impressive gauge of its appeal may be seen in the fact that a manuscript of it has now emerged at the other end of the Islamic world, in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>10</sup> Sustained modern scholarly interest in the text has developed more recently, primarily since the end of the Second World War, but has produced a number of useful monographs. These include several that discuss, for example, the literary aspects of the work and its place within cultural life under the Muwaḥḥids, and thus serve as an important counterbalance to the Western preoccupation with *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* as a philosophical work. As Fedwa Malti-Douglas comments,<sup>11</sup> there has also been a lively popularizing aspect to the reception of the text in the Arab world, represented by television specials and films.

The past several decades have further witnessed a dramatic improvement in the state of scholarly knowledge of the western Maghrib and al-Andalus in medieval Islamic times, expressed not only in terms of new and better text editions and a larger corpus of "facts" with which to work, but also in the breadth of much current research, and in the more finely nuanced interest taken in such previously underdeveloped topics as Ṣūfism and non-conformist trends in the western Maghrib and al-Andalus, the culture of the Murābiṭ and Muwaḥḥid eras, and the history of the exact sciences and medicine. Quite predictably, perhaps, more sophisticated investigation has been bringing to light social, economic, political, cultural, and intellectual patterns of considerable complexity and richness.

Hitherto, however, little effort has been made to re-evaluate Ibn Ṭufayl and his classic against this broader cultural background, and numerous basic errors have tended to display a stubborn tenacity in scholarly research. For example, it is still asserted in practically every discussion of Ibn Ṭufayl that he was the vizier of the Muwaḥḥid caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (r. 558–80/1163–84), although examination of the evidence for this quickly

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is noteworthy for the broader philosophical orientation of the translator, but is sometimes fairly free in its rendering of Ibn Ṭufayl's concise Arabic.

<sup>9</sup>Remke Kruk, *Wat geen oog heeft gezien, geen oor heeft gehoord en in geen mensenhart is opgekomen. De geschiedenis van Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1985).

<sup>10</sup>See Osman Bakar and Engku Ibrahim Ismail, "Malaysia," in *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, edited by Geoffrey Roper (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1992–94), II, 266.

<sup>11</sup>See below, p. 52.

reveals that references to him as *al-wazīr* are actually employing a common Andalusian and Maghribī epithet that simply serves to honor him for his learning.<sup>12</sup> It has often been asserted that he was the teacher of Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198);<sup>13</sup> but although this is not impossible, the fact remains that none of the sources—not even Ibn Rushd’s own accounts of his relationship with Ibn Ṭufayl—say anything about this. The teacher–student connection has been presumed on the strength of nothing more than Ibn Rushd’s account of how Ibn Ṭufayl introduced him to Abū Ya‘qūb.<sup>14</sup> On the side of social history, claims have been made for Ibn Ṭufayl as “the patron of all young minds and the emancipator of children,”<sup>15</sup> though one could hardly doubt that medieval Islamic society in general (i.e. not any single decisive personality) clearly acknowledged the special situation of childhood and the status of children,<sup>16</sup> and it is extremely doubtful that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* had any real or intended impact on attitudes on these matters anywhere.

As Ibn Ṭufayl’s own personal proclivities, cultural interests, and professional activities appeared to be fairly typical of the cultural vitality and ferment of his time, it seemed appropriate to attempt a new collaborative assessment of the author and his work, one that would not focus exclusively on philosophical aspects—already prominent in scholarly discussions—but rather seek to explore the full range of issues that arise when *Ḥayy ibn*

<sup>12</sup>See Lawrence I. Conrad, “An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids: Some Notes on the Public Career of Ibn Ṭufayl,” *Al-Qanṭara*, 16 (1995), pp. 6–8.

<sup>13</sup>See, for example, Miguel Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana* (Madrid: Asociación Española para el progreso de las ciencias, 1957), I, 375; ‘Umar Farrūkh, *Ibn Ṭufayl wa-qīṣṣatuhu “Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān”* (Beirut: Dār Lubnān li-l-ṭibā’a wa-l-nashr, 1402/1982), p. 30.

<sup>14</sup>Al-Marrākushī (wr. 621/1224), *Al-Mu‘jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, edited by R.P.A. Dozy, 2nd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1881), pp. 174–75. On Ibn Rushd’s relations with Ibn Ṭufayl, see Léon Gauthier’s Introduction to his second edition of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 121–28; P.G. Théry, “Conversation à Marrakech—révolution intellectuelle dans l’Europe: ceci se passait en 1169,” *L’Islam et l’Occident* (Vienna: Imprimerie Aubin, 1947), pp. 73–91; George F. Hourani, *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* (London: Luzac, 1961), pp. 11–14. It is not true, however (*pace* Hourani, *Averroes*, p. 18) that Ibn Rushd never refers to teachings by Ibn Ṭufayl in his own works. Such references are made in several of Ibn Rushd’s commentaries on Aristotelian texts: Book II of his middle commentary on the *Meteorologica*, Book III of his long commentary on the *De anima*, and Book XII of his middle commentary on the *Metaphysics*. See Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 26 and n. 2, 57; Ibn Rushd, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros* III.5.299, 303; edited by F. Stuart Crawford (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1953), p. 397.

<sup>15</sup>G.A. Russell, “The Role of Ibn Ṭufayl, a Moorish Physician, in the Discovery of Childhood in Seventeenth-Century England,” in *Child Care through the Centuries*, edited by John Cule and Terry Turner (Cardiff: STS Publishing, 1986), pp. 166–77.

<sup>16</sup>See, for example, Erhart Kahle, *Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) über Kinderkrankheiten im Kinderregimen seines Qānūn* (Erlangen: Verlagsbuchhandlung Hannelore Lüling, 1979); and more generally, Avner Gil’adi, *Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Islamic Society* (London: Macmillan, 1992).



*Yaqzān* is viewed against a broader and more varied social and cultural context, and give maximum play to the various disciplinary perspectives that might profitably be brought to bear on the text.

The resulting Wellcome Institute symposium on “The World of Ibn Ṭufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*” brought together a varied group of speakers and participants, assembled not by the common ground of disciplinary specialization, but by interest in a particular text. Though it did not occur to the editor in the months before the symposium, it quickly became clear to all during the proceedings that no Arabic text or author had ever been approached in this fashion. The interdisciplinary dimension emerged not at the level of the individual papers, each of which was written and presented from within one particular methodological perspective or research field, but rather in terms of the broader discussion of the presentations. There was considerable common ground among them, but each offered contributions and insights that complemented the others—often in crucial ways—while also inviting critique and discussion of alternative points of view.

This volume contains most of the papers presented at the symposium, as well as several by colleagues who were unable to attend or who were subsequently asked for contributions to fill gaps. Each speaks for itself, but while it would be impossible to recreate the spirit of stimulating discussion that dominated the proceedings of the symposium, an effort will be made here to draw attention to a number of specific points and sketch out the broad lines of some of the more important questions raised in them, and also to offer some more general background. Broadly speaking, these concerns can be considered under the rubrics of Ibn Ṭufayl’s personal intellectual interests, his public career under the Muwahhids, the literary sources and cultural influences that served to shape *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, and issues of literary form.

### *The Personal Intellectual Interests of Ibn Ṭufayl*

The available information on the general biography of Ibn Ṭufayl is easily summarized. The author of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* was an Arab who claimed descent from the famous clan of Qays and according to his medieval biographers was born in Guadix (Wādī Āsh), 60 kilometers northeast of the great cultural center of Granada in al-Andalus. His birthdate is unknown, but was probably *ca.* 510/1116. His father was a scholar from Marchena, and Ibn Ṭufayl himself practiced medicine in Granada; but further information about him is not available until he emerges to view in 542/1147, when he travelled to Marrakesh in present-day Morocco with Ibn Milhān, the former ruler of Guadix and an architect on his way to Marrakesh to undertake

an assignment for the Muwaḥḥid caliph ‘Abd al-Mu’min (r. 524–58/1130–63).<sup>17</sup> In 549/1154 a promising political career opened up for Ibn Ṭufayl with his appointment as confidential secretary to the governor of Ceuta and Tangier, and it was while he held this post that he came to the attention of the caliph Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf, who appointed him as his personal physician. He held this post until 578/1182, when he resigned from his medical duties in favor of Ibn Rushd.<sup>18</sup> But he continued to enjoy the patronage of Abū Ya‘qūb until the caliph’s death, when one source claims that Ibn Ṭufayl was imprisoned on suspicion of having poisoned him.<sup>19</sup> Others make no mention of this detail, however, and state that upon Ibn Ṭufayl’s own death only a year later, in 581/1185, the caliph’s son and successor Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb (r. 580–95/1184–99) presided at his funeral.<sup>20</sup>

The precise date for the writing of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is unknown, but a general range can at least be suggested. One option has already been set forth by Gauthier. Taking Ibn Ṭufayl’s comment in his introduction about rising young contemporaries as a reference to Ibn Rushd, he argues that since Ibn Rushd himself says that he was only known and appreciated after his introduction to the Muwaḥḥid caliph by Ibn Ṭufayl in 564/1169, a reference to his developing career could only have been made by Ibn Ṭufayl after that date. *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* must therefore have been written after 564/1169.<sup>21</sup> But there is in fact almost nothing to recommend this scenario. Of the various objections that could be raised, the one upon which all else depends is the key passage in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, which reads as follows:

As for those of our contemporaries who came after them (i.e. after the contemporaries of Ibn Bājja), they are still on the rise, or have halted prematurely, or are among those concerning whom no accurate information has reached us.

There is nothing here to suggest that a specific reference to Ibn Rushd is intended. Ibn Ṭufayl is simply saying that of his younger contemporaries, none has yet developed into a scholar with mature abilities in philosophy:

<sup>17</sup>See Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 1–6; Dominique Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, translated by Olivia Stewart (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 25–27; also the paper of Vincent Cornell, p. 134 below.

<sup>18</sup>The date is given in Ibn Abī Zar‘ (d. ca. 710/1310), *Rawḍ al-qirṭās*, edited by C.J. Tornberg (Uppsala: Academia Upsaliena, 1843–46), I, 135.

<sup>19</sup>Ibn Sa‘īd al-Andalusī (d. 685/1286), *Al-Mughrib fī ḥulā l-Maghrib*, edited by Shawqī Dayf (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-ma‘ārif, 1953–55), II, 85 no. 403.

<sup>20</sup>Ibn al-Abbār (d. 658/1260), *Al-Muqtaḍab min kitāb tuḥfat al-qadīm*, edited by Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī (Cairo: Al-Maṭba‘a al-amīriya, 1957), p. 72; Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1375), *Al-Iḥāta fī akhbār Gharnāta*, edited by Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ‘Inān (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1393–97/1973–77), II, 482.

<sup>21</sup>Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 41–43.

some are still honing their skills while others have fallen by the wayside, and concerning yet others he has no reliable information. Ibn Ṭufayl would have been on the lookout for promising young scholars throughout his public career, on which more will be said below, so all this passage suggests—and that only obliquely—is that Ibn Ṭufayl was probably in the service of the Muwahhids at the time.

Far more useful to us is Ibn Rushd's comment that when Ibn Ṭufayl asked him to undertake commentaries on the works of Aristotle (of particular interest to the caliph Abū Ya'qūb), our author added: "The only things that prevent me from doing so myself are, as you know, my advanced age, my official responsibilities (note the wording: *ishtighālī bi-l-khidma*), and my preoccupation (*ṣarf 'ināyatī*) with a project that for me is more important."<sup>22</sup> What was this project? According to al-Marrākushī, who is very well informed on the literary history of the Maghrib and Spain in general and on Ibn Ṭufayl in particular, this project would have been *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*: "His preoccupation (the same wording: *ṣarf 'ināyatīhi*) in the last years of his life was with spiritual knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ilāhī*) at the expense of all else, and he was anxious to reconcile philosophy and religion."<sup>23</sup> If this project was indeed *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, then this report gives us a general date for the work. Ibn Ṭufayl is preoccupied with the book but still in active government service, i.e. before 578/1182, when he resigned from his duties, probably due to age. But as he also states that he is already rather old, it is unlikely that this could be many years prior to his retirement. A range of 573–78/1177–82 would thus seem a reasonable estimate for the period of Ibn Ṭufayl's primary concentration on the text, though he may well have been working on it prior to this period as well.

The personal intellectual interests of Ibn Ṭufayl were obviously broad-ranging ones. His career as a physician is very frequently mentioned;<sup>24</sup> if

<sup>22</sup> Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, p. 175.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>24</sup> On his medical career and medical writings, see al-Shaqundī (d. 629/1231), *Risāla fī l-difā' 'an al-Andalus*, in al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1631), *Nafḥ al-tib min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, edited by Ihsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1388/1968), III, 193; Ibn al-Abbār, *Muqtaḍab*, p. 72; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270), *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, edited by August Müller (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-wahbiya, 1299/1882), II, 78; Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Mughrib*, II, 85 no. 403; Ibn Abī Zar', *Rawḍ al-qirtās*, I, 135; al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *Al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, IV, edited by Sven Dederling (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1959), p. 37; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *A'māl al-a'lām*, edited by E. Lévi-Provençal (Rabat: Institut des Hautes-Etudes Marocaines, 1938), p. 264; idem, *Iḥāṭa*, II, 479; Gauthier, *Ibn Thofaīl*, pp. 5–6, 18–19, 25–26; Cruz Hernández, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 373–74, 375, 398, 401; Farrūkh, *Ibn Ṭufayl wa-qīṣṣatuhu "Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān"*, pp. 18–32; Aḥmad Shawkat al-Shaṭṭī, *Nazarāt fī ṭibb Ibn al-Ṭufayl al-Andalusī: mustawḥāt min qīṣṣat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (Damascus: Maṭba'at Jāmi'at Dimashq, 1382/1962); Parveen Hasanali, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*" (M.A. thesis:

later authorities have little of substance to say about him in this capacity, it is nevertheless clear that they held him in esteem and that he enjoyed a very high medical reputation.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, had this not been the case it would hardly be expected—regardless of his lively company and knowledge in other areas—that the caliph would retain him as his personal physician.

His medical career echoes in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, and in references to dialogues with Ibn Rushd on the latter's *Kullīyāt*,<sup>26</sup> but is best reflected in his *Al-Urjūza fī l-ṭibb*, “*Rajaz Poem on Medicine*.”<sup>27</sup> In Arabic poetry the *rajaz* meter—the simplest and most regular one—was extensively used to create mnemonic works to assist in the memorization of the key points and arguments on a given subject; *urjūzas* of this kind could be found in fields ranging from inheritance law to grammar. Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) may have been the first to compose *urjūzas* in medicine; of his several mnemonic poems, the best known is his *alfīya*, or “poem in 1000 verses” (in this case, actually 1326 verses), a summary of his massive *Al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* that proceeded through theoretical to practical aspects of medicine.<sup>28</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl produced a work on diagnosis, therapeutics, and material medica

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McGill University, 1987), pp. 11–13. On Ibn Ṭufayl within the broader context of medicine under the Muwaḥḥids, see Muḥammad al-Manūnī, *Al-‘Ulūm wa-l-ādāb wa-l-funūn ‘alā ‘ahd al-muwaḥḥidīn* (Tetuán: Al-Maṭba‘a al-mahdiyya, 1369/1950), pp. 123–35; ‘Abd Allāh ‘Alī ‘Allām, *Al-Dawla al-muwaḥḥidīya bi-l-Maghrib fī ‘ahd ‘Abd al-Mu‘min ibn ‘Alī* (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1971), pp. 361–64; Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-Khaṭṭābī, *Al-Ṭibb wa-l-aṭibbā’ fī l-Andalus al-islāmīya* (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1988), I, 60–61 no. 99; Dominique Urvoy, *Penseurs d’al-Andalus: la vie intellectuelle à Cordoue et Séville au temps des empires berbères (fin XIe siècle-début XIIIe siècle)* (Paris: CNRS, 1990), pp. 178–82.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Shaqundī, for example, replies to the detractors of Andalusian scholarship with this challenge: “In the field of medicine, have you the equal of Ibn Ṭufayl, author of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*?” See al-Shaqundī’s *Risāla fī l-difā’ ‘an al-Andalus*, in al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib*, III, 193.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, *‘Uyūn al-anbā’*, II, 78.

<sup>27</sup> An apparently unique but defective copy of this work survives in Ms. 3158 of the Al-Qarawīyūn Library in Fez, but so far is known to scholars almost exclusively through the summary, with many extracts from the text, by Maḥmūd al-Ḥājj Qāsim Muḥammad in his “Qirā’a fī urjūzat Ibn Ṭufayl fī l-ṭibb,” *Majallat Ma’had al-makhtūṭāt al-‘arabīya*, 30 (1986), pp. 47–82. To judge from the colophon of the Fez manuscript, the title given to the work by Ibn Ṭufayl seems to have begun with the word *Dīwān* (Muḥammad, “Qirā’a,” p. 53: *kamala l-dīwān wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh...*); the title page simply says: “A *rajaz* verse composition on the science of medicine and therapy organized into seven discourses (*maqālāt*) composed by Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭufayl...” (*ibid.*, p. 52). Ibn al-Khaṭīb describes it as *Al-Urjūza fī l-ṭibb* (*Iḥāṭa*, II, 479); as the genuine title is still only partially known, this one will suffice until better information becomes available. Cf. also Tommaso Sarnelli, “Primauté de Cordoue dans la médecine arabe d’Occident,” in *Actas del primer Congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos* (Madrid: Comité permanente de Congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos, 1964), p. 451.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Urjūza fī l-ṭibb*, edited and translated by Henri Jahier and Abdelkader Noureddine as *Poème de la médecine* (Paris: Société d’Edition “Les Belles Lettres,”



that was of even greater ambition; indeed, his is the longest *urjūza* in medieval Islamic medical literature. Following the traditional head-to-foot arrangement taken up from late antique Greek medicine, he composed a work in seven discourses and over 250 chapters; the extant text extends to over 7700 verses, and as the Fez manuscript has several major gaps, the original work must have been even longer. The published extracts from the text reveal no original medical thinking,<sup>29</sup> but such was never the purpose of *urjūzas*, which were written to offer ready access to what was already known. Though Ibn Sīnā's *Urjūza* was known in al-Andalus in Ibn Ṭufayl's day,<sup>30</sup> the fact that the two authors followed different arrangements for their material suggests that Ibn Ṭufayl's work was not simply an expansion of his predecessor's.

Far more prominent in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is Ibn Ṭufayl's interest in philosophy. Influences on him in this area will be discussed below; here our attention may be turned to the equally important question of the extent to which scholars interested in philosophy could have pursued this subject in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in Ibn Ṭufayl's day.

The impressive achievements of the great Andalusian philosophers notwithstanding, it is clear that throughout medieval Islamic times philosophy was a discipline underdeveloped and difficult to promote in Spain and the Maghrib. Both official and popular circles regarded it with suspicion and hostility, and philosophical inquiry often provoked charges that it led to (or amounted to) disbelief and challenged the truths of religion.<sup>31</sup> The

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1956). Cf. also Haven C. Krueger, *Avicenna's Poem on Medicine* (Springfield: Thomas, 1963).

<sup>29</sup>Gauthier makes a point of denying Ibn Ṭufayl any originality in medicine, based on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*; see his *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 25–26.

<sup>30</sup>Ibn Rushd wrote a commentary on it; see Manfred Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), p. 155.

<sup>31</sup>Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), for example, divides Andalusian society in his day into four groups so far as their attitude toward logic is concerned. The first holds that this discipline comprises blasphemy and leads to Godless heresy (*ilhād*). The second group, the largest and consisting of people quick to show hostility to that of which they are ignorant, opposes logic as mindless drivel and prattle. The third group comprises those unqualified persons who nevertheless dabble in logic and so spread nothing but corrupt ideas. The fourth group, the only one on the correct path, consists of those who both uphold logic and are qualified to make profitable use of it. See Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Taqrīb li-ḥadd al-mantiq wa-l-madkhal ilayhi*, edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār maktabat al-ḥayāt, 1959), pp. 6–8. Ibn Ṭulmūs (d. 620/1223) refers to similar problems a century and a half later in his *Al-Madkhal li-ṣinā'at al-mantiq*, edited and translated by Miguel Asín Palacios (Madrid: Imprenta Ibérica E. Maestra, 1916), pp. 8, 10, 12. Ibn Rushd devotes the majority of his famous essay on the harmony of religion and philosophy to refutation of charges, advanced by al-Ghazālī in his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayna l-Islām wa-l-zandaqa*, that philosophy is a blasphemous, heretical, and useless field of scholarly inquiry. See his *Faṣl al-maqāl*, edited by George F. Hourani (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), pp. 5–29. Such examples could be continued indefinitely.

implications of this are clearly articulated by Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī (d. 685/1286) in connection with Andalusian scholars:

All of the branches of learning are subjects of interest and importance to them, with the exceptions of philosophy and astronomy. Both of these are of great interest to the elite, but no work on these topics can be undertaken openly out of fear of the common folk. Any time it is said: "So-and-so is giving lectures on philosophy," or: "He pursues astronomy," the common folk brand him with the title of Godless heretic (*zindīq*) and the name sticks with him to his dying day. And if he lets slip a suspicious statement (*shubha*), they will stone him or burn his books<sup>32</sup> before his case even comes to the attention of the authorities. The ruler might put him to death just to curry favor with the common folk, and on many an occasion their kings have given orders that books on these subjects be burned on sight (*idhā wujudat*).<sup>33</sup>

Reflecting on the situation confronting Andalusian and Maghribī scholars in the time of Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd, he again paints a bleak picture:

<sup>32</sup>The bad end awaiting the hypothetical philosopher in this passage requires clarification. The phrase *rajamūhu bi-l-ḥijāra* clearly signifies "they will stone him [to death]." The word *ḥaraqūhu*, however, is rather more obscure. It would at first seem to mean that "they (i.e. the common folk) will burn him," i.e. specifying a second means of execution (the first form of *ḥ-r-q* can bear this meaning, though one of course expects the second or fourth form). But execution by burning was viewed very gravely in medieval Islam: the victim would thereby stand doomed before the Judgment Day, since destruction by fire was held to consume not only the body, which could not then be called forth to answer for the victim's deeds, but the soul as well; accidental death in a fire was thus regarded as one of the categories of martyrdom that guaranteed entry to Paradise. In any case, punishment by fire was viewed as hovering on the brink of usurping the prerogative of God (i.e. by condemnation to *al-nār*, "the Fire," i.e. Hell), as mentioned, *inter alia*, in Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (3), vs. 181. Execution by burning was thus ordered in only the most extreme circumstances, and certainly would not be allowed through mob action without authorization from the ruling authorities. On this point, see the precedents discussed in al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826), *Al-Muṣannaf*, edited by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī (Beirut: Al-Majlis al-'ilmī, 1403/1983), V, 212–15; Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), *Sīrat rasūl Allāh*, edited by Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1858–60), I.1, 468–69; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il*, edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1384–99/1964–79), II, 100; al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, edited by Ludolf Krehl and T.W. Juynboll (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1862–1908), II, 237–38, 251, 252, *Jihād* nos. 107, 149, 153; IV, 329, *Istitābat al-murtaddīn* no. 2. The text may be corrupt here, and for *wa-ḥaraqūhu* one should probably read something like *wa-ḥaraqū [kutuba]hu*, as implied by the closing observation in the passage.

<sup>33</sup>Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭīb*, I, 221.

The doyen of philosophy in our age was Abū l-Walīd ibn Rushd of Cordoba, who wrote philosophical works which he disavowed once he noticed how averse the Muwaḥḥid [caliph] al-Manṣūr (i.e. Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb), who imprisoned him because of these works, was to this field of learning. A similar case was Ibn Ḥabīb [al-Qasrī (d. ca. 625/1228)], whom al-Ma'mūn, son of the above-mentioned al-Manṣūr, killed for pursuing such studies in Séville. In Spain philosophy is an abhorred field of inquiry that cannot be pursued openly by its adherents, who, for the same reason, must keep their works hidden. As for astronomy... in our time Muṭarraḥ of Séville used to devote himself to writing on this subject; but the people of his town accused him of Godless heresy (*zandaqa*) because of his dedication to it, and he expounded publicly none of what he had written.<sup>34</sup>

This is perhaps an extreme statement, but other sources do confirm that measures were often taken against scholars of philosophy. Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931) could only pursue his mystical and philosophical ideas in the isolation of a hermit's cell on the cliffs of the Sierra outside the Umayyad capital of Cordoba. Even at such a remove, criticism and accusations compelled him to leave Spain; and when he later returned he was again condemned and reviled. His books were proscribed, and after his death they were burned.<sup>35</sup> Again in the capital, in about 368/979, the powerful Umayyad chamberlain al-Manṣūr ibn Abī 'Āmir (d. 392/1002) brought the '*ulamā*' to the great library that had been assembled by al-Ḥakam II ibn Sa'īd (r. 350–66/961–76) to rid the collection of works on philosophy, astronomy, logic, and other books they considered irreligious. Those removed were cast into wells or burned.<sup>36</sup> In later years Ibn Ḥazm could name only two philosophers (one of whom had been killed) in his essay on the merits of al-Andalus and its eminent men, and only four minor theologians.<sup>37</sup> He himself was eventually

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 185–86.

<sup>35</sup> Miguel Asín Palacios, *Ibn Masarra y su escuela: orígenes de la filosofía hispano-musulmana*, in his *Obras escogidas* (Madrid: Escuelas de estudios árabes de Madrid y Granada, 1946–48), I, 40–52. Some important corrections to Asín's views are made by S.M. Stern in his "Ibn Masarra, Follower of Pseudo-Eupedocles—an Illusion," in *Actas del 4.º congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), pp. 325–37. For a more recent assessment, see Isabel Fierro Bello, *La heterodoxia en al-Andalus durante el periodo omeya* (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1987), pp. 113–18.

<sup>36</sup> Ṣā'īd al-Andalusī (d. 462/1070), *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, edited by Louis Cheikho in *Al-Mashriq*, 14 (1911), p. 855. Cf. the discussions in Asín Palacios, *Ibn Masarra y su escuela*, p. 120; E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1950–53), II, 218; Fierro, *Heterodoxia*, pp. 161–62.

<sup>37</sup> See his *Risāla fī faḍl al-Andalus wa-dhikr rijālihā*, edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās in his *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assasa al-'arabīya li-l-dirāsāt wa-l-nashr, 1980–83), II, 185–86.

imprisoned and his books burned, though the author remained defiant.<sup>38</sup> The books of al-Ghazālī were consigned to the flames under the Murābiṭ caliph 'Alī ibn Yūsuf (r. 500–537/1106–42), who threatened with death and confiscation of property anyone found to possess even a fragment of these works.<sup>39</sup> From other sources we find that the fate of Ibn Rushd was part of a more general program against philosophical studies. As Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a was told by Abū Marwān al-Bājī (d. 635/1237–38), a former *qādī* of Séville who came to Syria on pilgrimage, the caliph Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb decided to allow no book on logic or philosophy (*ḥikma*) to survive in his realm, and most emphatically warned that no one should possess books on logic or philosophy or study any topic pertaining to these subjects, "lest great harm befall him." The offensive books were gathered from libraries and private collections and burned, and those who owned or studied them were publicly disgraced. In such a situation, the accusation: "He has philosophy books in his house," in this case levelled against the physician Abū Bakr ibn Zuhr (d. 596/1199), was most serious indeed.<sup>40</sup> It was probably during this campaign that Ibn Rushd was disgraced, imprisoned, and exiled, and his books burned,<sup>41</sup> though it is also probably true that the situation was not a matter of mere imperial whim, and that, as Urvoy argues, Ibn Rushd was sacrificed to the conservative jurists in an effort to win popular support at a time when Christian forces were making gains in the north.<sup>42</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising to find, then, that in Spain and the western Maghrib philosophy was a field of study that was pursued not as an established comprehensive discipline or under the aegis of a "school,"<sup>43</sup> but rather in limited special topics by individuals who often knew little about

<sup>38</sup>See Yāqūt (wr. 621/1224), *Irshād al-arīb fī ma'rifat al-adīb*, edited by D.S. Margoliouth, 2nd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1923–31), V, 92–96, quoting the Andalusian historian Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076) and some of the verse composed by Ibn Ḥazm himself in reaction to the burning of his books; al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, III, 193.

<sup>39</sup>Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, p. 123; Ibn Ṭulmūs, *Al-Madkhal fī šinā'at al-manṭiq*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup>Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā*, II, 69–70.

<sup>41</sup>Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, pp. 223–25; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā*, II, 76.

<sup>42</sup>Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>43</sup>Watt also suggests that philosophers in Spain at this time "were very few in number," but then continues to propose that "there are some traces, however, of what might perhaps be dignified by the name of a school, since Ibn Ṭufayl speaks with respect of the achievements of his predecessor Ibn Bājja." See his "Philosophy and Theology Under the Almohads," in *Actas del primer congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos* (Madrid: Comité permanente del Congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos, 1964), p. 104. Ibn Ṭufayl's opinion of Ibn Bājja suggests nothing about the presence or absence of a circle of thought, however. And in any case Ibn Ṭufayl, while admiring Ibn Bājja's intellect and philosophical method, censures him for his critique of the mystics and criticizes him for encouraging the amassing of wealth, even by devious means, and for sacrificing his own work for the sake of self-enrichment. See *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 9–10, 12–13; Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 68–74.



each other's work and had great trouble gaining<sup>i</sup> access to seminal works of earlier writers. In the generation preceding Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Bājjā compares the philosopher in Spain to the odd weed that here and there sprouts among the crops—unsown, uncultivated, unwelcome, and isolated, and subject to the ruler's dictum that the crop must not be allowed to suffer for the sake of the weeds.<sup>44</sup>

We may thus conclude that while medicine and philosophy in medieval Islamic intellectual life were—following the lead of late antiquity—twin disciplines for many leading physicians, Ibn Ṭufayl's pursuit of philosophy in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib must have been fraught with difficulty. He was extremely lucky, as Vincent Cornell rightly stresses,<sup>45</sup> to have lived in the age of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, who was the only one of the early Muwahḥid caliphs to display an interest in philosophy, much less encourage it among his courtiers. On the other hand, our author was himself able to recognize that it had only been in his own lifetime, with Ibn Bājjā, that philosophy has developed to amount to anything more than mathematics and logic,<sup>46</sup> and even here it must be said that in Ibn Ṭufayl's case it is likely that he was unfamiliar with much of the relevant philosophical scholarship and literature in circulation in his own day. Abū Ya'qūb made concerted efforts to collect books—especially philosophical and scientific works—from all over Spain and the Maghrib, and does seem to have assembled an impressive library.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, books written in the great cultural centers of the Islamic East were often difficult to obtain in the West, and some works are known never to have reached there. Our author refers to this difficulty several times in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Books of the sort he wishes to write are "rarer than red sulfur," he says, "especially in this region where we are."<sup>48</sup> The philosophical writings of al-Kindī, which he would have found very congenial to his own views, were apparently unknown to him.<sup>49</sup> None of the esoteric works of al-Ghazālī have reached Spain, he complains, and the available corpus of al-Fārābī's writings con-

<sup>44</sup>Ibn Bājjā, *Tadbīr al-mutawahḥid*, edited in his *Opera metaphysica* by Majid Fakhry (Beirut: Dār al-nahār, 1968), pp. 42–43.

<sup>45</sup>See below, p. 163.

<sup>46</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>47</sup>Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, pp. 170, 172. On libraries more generally, see Julián Ribera y Tarragó, "Bibliófilos y bibliotecas en la España musulmana," in his *Disertaciones y opúsculos* (Madrid: Estanislao Maestre, 1928), I, 181–228; also al-Manūnī, *Al-'Ulūm wa-l-ādāb wa-l-funūn*, pp. 277–86; Ḥasan 'Alī Ḥasan, *Al-Ḥadāra al-islāmīya fī l-Maghrib wa-l-Andalus: 'aṣr al-murābiṭīn wa-l-muwahḥidīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1980), pp. 510–11. The eminent scholars of western Islam are discussed in detail by al-Shaqundī in al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, III, 186–222.

<sup>48</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup>See the discussion of these points by Bernd Radtke, pp. 171–72, 194 below.

sists for the most part of logic.<sup>50</sup> And such problems confronted him even in efforts to gain access to the work of other Andalusian authors. As he never knew Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139) and presumably could not obtain any of his books, his information about his thought is very limited.<sup>51</sup> Even where contemporaries are concerned information is insecure and one knows that he might not be receiving an accurate view.<sup>52</sup>

These complaints are echoed in the next generation by Ibn Ṭulmūs (d. 620/1223), who laments the fact that even on so basic a philosophical concern as logic one encounters great difficulty in finding either teachers with whom to study or books to read on the subject.<sup>53</sup> These same difficulties may have much to do with what Ibn Ṭufayl sees as the proliferation of "pseudo-philosophers" (*mutafalsifa*) who spread corrupt ideas.<sup>54</sup>

This of course raises an important question: If philosophy was so resisted and marginalized in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in this era, should we not expect that problematic access to either texts or teachers would have made it extremely difficult to study the subject effectively, much less become good at it? It is of course true that the experts are always the small minority anyway, but in the context of Andalusian and Maghribī savants we might well expect a thorough command and understanding of the field to be even more exceptional.

This question will return to our attention below, but for the moment it will suffice to observe that to the extent that Ibn Ṭufayl could claim to be an authority on philosophy, his learning is precisely of the sort that one would expect. The text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is so far the most comprehensive witness to this, and demonstrates that despite the difficulties he managed to become quite familiar with the broad lines and many of the particulars of the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophical systems under discussion in medieval Islamic times. This has been studied at length in previous scholarship and is also well represented in this volume. To take but a few examples: Ibn Ṭufayl's approach to the natural sciences—if almost entirely concentrated on practical points—is solidly Aristotelian;<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 13, 17, 18.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13. Cf. D.M. Dunlop, "Philosophical Predecessors and Contemporaries of Ibn Bājjah," *Islamic Quarterly*, 2 (1955), pp. 100–16.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Ibn Ṭulmūs, *Al-Madkhal li-ṣināʿat al-mantiq*, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 18, 155. Ibn Ṭufayl does not use the term *mutafalsifa* to mean, as Gauthier thought, "disciples des grands falâçifa" or "philosophes de ce siècle," nor does he use it to refer to philosophers of the second rank, as opposed to the great masters. See Gauthier's defense of this view in *Ibn Thofail*, p. 67 n. 1. Ibn Ṭufayl's second reference to this group, in which he calls them *mutafalsifa*, is clarified by his first mention of them in his Introduction, where he calls them *qawm min muntaḥilī l-falsafa*, "a group of those who presume to study philosophy."

<sup>55</sup> See the paper of Remke Kruk, pp. 69–89 below.

his philosophy reflects Neoplatonic elements picked up, *inter alia* from two works by al-Ghazālī: *Al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*<sup>56</sup> and *Mishkāt al-anwār*;<sup>57</sup> Ibn Sīnā's *Al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* and his *Kitāb al-shifā'* are both important sources of ideas and direct quotations, not only in Ibn Ṭufayl's conception of Neoplatonic philosophy,<sup>58</sup> but also in his psychology and thinking on cognition.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps most interesting of all, the very act of communicating his philosophical message in the form of an allegorical tale reflects an attitude toward demonstrative validity grounded squarely—if not explicitly—on the *Poetics* of Aristotle and al-Fārābī's commentary on this work.<sup>60</sup>

For reasons that will emerge below, it may be unwise to take *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* as representative of Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophical abilities and thinking; but alternatives are not particularly ready to hand. His medical *urjūza* remains unpublished and almost inaccessible, and several other works on metaphysics and the natural sciences, including a work on the soul, appear to be lost.<sup>61</sup> To judge from the comments by his student al-Bitrūjī (d. 581/1185), he was also learned in astronomy and proposed some new ideas in this field;<sup>62</sup> but what these might have been is not stated, and can

<sup>56</sup>See below, pp. 66, 100 n. 30, 165, 256.

<sup>57</sup>See below, pp. 179–81. On Ibn Ṭufayl's assessment of al-Ghazālī, cf. also Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 382–85; Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 60–68.

<sup>58</sup>This has frequently been noticed and discussed; see the useful summary in Muhsin Mahdi, "Philosophical Literature," in *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbāsid Period*, edited by M.J.L. Young, J.D. Latham, and R.B. Serjeant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 100–101; and here, in particular, the papers by Remke Kruk and Bernd Radtke, pp. 69, 75, 85, 86, 166–67, 175–78 below.

<sup>59</sup>See G.Z. Atal (G.A. Russell), "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*: the First Psychological Novel," in *Texte und Contexte. Studien zur deutschen und vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft*, edited by M. Durzak, E. Reichmann, and U. Weisstein (Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag, 1972), pp. 9–27. This characterization of the text may of course be queried on various counts, such as the justifications for counting a medieval text as a psychological novel, and whether, according to those criteria, this text qualifies as the first such work. Similar observations may be raised with respect to Francisco Pon Boigues' *El filósofo autodidacto de Abentofail* (Zaragosa: Comas Hermanos, 1900), a Spanish translation that appears to have been the first interpretation of the text as a "psychological novel."

<sup>60</sup>See the paper by Salim Kemal, pp. 195–228 below.

<sup>61</sup>In his *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 38–41, as also in his Introduction to his second edition of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, iv–v, Gauthier rejects al-Marrākushī's statement that Ibn Ṭufayl wrote a book on the soul (*Mu'jib*, p. 172); his arguments are weak, however, and there is no good reason to suppose that al-Marrākushī was mistaken on this point. See Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwahhids," p. 4 and n. 6; *idem*, "Al-Marrākushī on Ibn Ṭufayl's *De anima*: Fact or Fancy?," *Al-Qanṭara*, forthcoming.

<sup>62</sup>See al-Bitrūjī, *Kitāb fī l-hay'a*, edited and translated by Bernard R. Goldstein as *Al-Bitrūjī: On the Principles of Astronomy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), I, 61 §18 (trans.); II, 49 (text).

certainly not be discerned in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, beyond the fact that he rejected the theory of eccentric spheres.<sup>63</sup>

Not less important is the dimension of Ṣūfī theosophy. That this area of Ibn Ṭufayl's work has long remained unexplored is simply a matter of neglect: *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* has hitherto drawn the attention almost exclusively of scholars concerned with the history of philosophy. Of the many articles on Ibn Ṭufayl in encyclopaedic compendia, for example, only one has been written by a scholar of Ṣūfism;<sup>64</sup> in the standard works on Ṣūfism, furthermore, Ibn Ṭufayl is not usually mentioned,<sup>65</sup> and in Gauthier's detailed and invaluable glossary to his edition of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, the Ṣūfī terms are usually omitted. There is also a more general tendency to treat Ṣūfism as an abstraction that can be studied in terms of Neoplatonic and other emanationist philosophies, rather than as a living intellectual and spiritual tradition in its own right, and this viewpoint finds expression in studies on Ibn Ṭufayl's work.<sup>66</sup>

The first signs of an emergent ascetic tradition in al-Andalus can be seen in the reign of the Umayyad caliph al-Ḥakam I ibn Hishām (r. 180–206/796–822,<sup>67</sup> and a more articulate tradition was already flourishing by the time 'Abd al-Raḥmān III ibn Muḥammad (r. 300–350/912–61) acceded to the throne of the Umayyads at the end of the next century.<sup>68</sup> As Vincent Cornell argues, the emergence of "an ascetic, action-oriented, socially conscious and *shar'ī* form of Ṣūfism" was linked to the increasing role of *ḥadīth* scholarship and a resulting intensification of interest in the ascetic and pietistic norms associated with the early Muslim community.<sup>69</sup> The term "Ṣūfī" was first used to describe individual ascetics and mystics in the

<sup>63</sup>Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, p. 42.

<sup>64</sup>Henri Corbin, art. "Ibn Ṭufayl" in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), IV, 109–10.

<sup>65</sup>G.-C. Anawati and Louis Gardet devote some attention to him in their *Mystique musulmane* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1961), p. 54, but only briefly.

<sup>66</sup>The title of Hawi's *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, for example, would seem to imply a primary interest in the Ṣūfī dimension of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*; but in fact only the concluding chapter (pp. 231–53) deals directly with mysticism, and even here only as an adjunct to philosophy (framed with reference to Søren Kierkegaard) and with heavily judgmental overtones (e.g. p. 253: "One cannot but be reminded of L.S.D. trips..."). The mystical dimensions of the text are addressed in Hillel G. Fradkin, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* on the Relationship of Mysticism, Prophecy and Philosophy" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Chicago, 1978), but not with reference to any mystical tradition, and indeed, based on hardly any philosophical thinking beyond that of Ibn Ṭufayl himself.

<sup>67</sup>See Fierro, *Heterodoxia*, p. 44.

<sup>68</sup>See Asín Palacios, *Ibn Masarra y su escuela*, pp. 89–100, 104–109; Fierro, *Heterodoxia*, pp. 129–40.

<sup>69</sup>See below, p. 142; and on *ḥadīth*, Isabel Fierro, "The Introduction of *Ḥadīth* in al-Andalus," *Der Islam*, 66 (1989), pp. 68–93.

fourth/tenth century,<sup>70</sup> and it was in this same era that Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940) was able to devote an entire chapter to the sayings and deeds of Andalusian and Maghribī ascetics and Ṣūfī-style preachers.<sup>71</sup> The intellectual activities of al-Ṭalamankī (d. 429/1038) and the subsequent arrival of the works of al-Ghazālī in the West enormously stimulated the spread of a formal systematic Ṣūfism.<sup>72</sup> By Ibn Ṭufayl’s lifetime Ṣūfī luminaries were a prominent feature in Muwaḥḥid society in Marrakesh,<sup>73</sup> and the tradition more generally had such strength and roots that the Ṣūfī Abū l-Qāsim ibn Qasī had been able to proclaim himself the *mahdī* and lead from his *rābiṭa* near Silvas a revolt that lasted ten years before Ibn Qasī was assassinated in 546/1151.<sup>74</sup> And from the *Fahrāsa* of Abū Bakr ibn Khayr (d. 575/1179), which mentions not a single philosophical text, it is clear that ascetic and Ṣūfī works were readily available and accepted as part of the learning expected from a well-read scholar in Ibn Ṭufayl’s day.<sup>75</sup> The Andalusian and Maghribī tradition of Ṣūfism is therefore one that should be expected to shed important light on Ibn Ṭufayl’s work.

That Ibn Ṭufayl had important connections with Ṣūfism has been noticed previously, and in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* there are of course numerous indications of this. In his introduction he makes specific reference to the *shaṭaḥāt*, or ecstatic utterances, of such mystics as al-Bisṭāmī (d. 260/874) and al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922), suggesting that what is to follow will address issues that Ibn Ṭufayl sees as not solely philosophical.<sup>76</sup> The text also makes use of some of the most prominent vocabulary of Ṣūfism—*dhawq*, for example, as well as the transcendent experience of *fanā*’, the identification

<sup>70</sup>See Maribel Fierro, “The Polemic about the *Karāmāt al-awliyā*’ and the Development of Ṣūfism in al-Andalus (Fourth/Tenth–Fifth/Eleventh Centuries),” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55 (1992), p. 237.

<sup>71</sup>Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *Al-‘Iqd (al-farid)*, edited by Ahmad Amin et al. (Cairo: Lajnat al-ta’līf wa-l-tarjama wa-l-nashr, 1368–84/1949–65), III, 140–227; Asín Palacios, *Ibn Masarra y su escuela*, pp. 185–91.

<sup>72</sup>See A. Bel, “Le ṣūfisme en Occident musulman au XIIe et au XIIIe siècle de J.C.,” *Annales de l’Institut des Etudes Orientales*, 1 (1934–35), pp. 145–61; Fierro, “Polemic,” pp. 247–49; also the discussion in the paper by Vincent Cornell, pp. 140–44 below.

<sup>73</sup>See Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 97.

<sup>74</sup>See Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *A’māl al-a’lām*, pp. 285–90; al-Marrākushī, *Mu’jib*, pp. 150–51; Jacinto Bosch-Vilá, *Los Almorávides* (Tetuán: Editora Marrouquí, 1956), pp. 287–95; J. Dreher, *Das Imāmat des islamischen Mystikers Abūlqāsim Aḥmad ibn Ḥusain ibn Qasī (gest. 1151)* (Bonn: Orientalisches Seminar, 1985); *idem*, “L’imāmat d’Ibn Qasī à Mértola (automne 1144–été 1145): légitimité d’une domination soufie,” *Mélanges de l’Institut Dominicain d’Etudes Orientales du Caire*, 18 (1988), pp. 153–210.

<sup>75</sup>Abū Bakr ibn Khayr, *Fahrāsa*, edited by Francisco Codera and J. Ribera Tarrago (Saragossa: Comas, 1894), pp. 268–304.

<sup>76</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 4. What he does not tell us is that this passage is taken from al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāt al-anwār*, and does not necessarily represent his own experiences.

of the Necessary Being as *al-ḥaqq*, “the Truth,” Absāl’s pronouncement of Ḥayy as a *waliy*, a Ṣūfī saint, and description of the circle of Absāl’s friends as *murīdūn*, “aspiring” ones, i.e. Ṣūfī novices. Probably a Ṣūfī formulation is one of the two traditions that Ibn Ṭufayl quotes from the Prophet Muḥammad: “I am the sense of hearing by which he hears and the sense of sight by which he sees.”<sup>77</sup> The “thin veil” set before the reader and the 70,000 faces that Ḥayy sees during his vision<sup>78</sup> are prominent Ṣūfī metaphors.<sup>79</sup>

It is therefore unsurprising that Ibn Ṭufayl should be described as “an adherent of Ṣūfism” (*mutaṣawwif*) in one account,<sup>80</sup> and further indications of the breadth of his commitments in this area may be seen in the fact that some of his poetry deals with ascetic themes.<sup>81</sup> Of particular importance, however, is Vincent Cornell’s discovery of his Ṣūfī *silsila*, or spiritual lineage: here we find that Ibn Ṭufayl studied with Abū l-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abbād, whose teacher was a student of Majd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), the brother of the famous theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.<sup>82</sup> The significance of this information is clearly its establishment of an especially strong pedagogical connection with al-Ghazālī, but it is also worth observing the way in which it illustrates the rich variety of intellectual and professional pursuits at the Muwaḥḥid court, with philosophical, Ṣūfī, and medical influences all active in the formation of the intellectual persona of Ibn Ṭufayl. But it is misleading to speak only of the strictly personal and intellectual side of a scholar’s work, and it is thus to our author’s role in public life under the Muwaḥḥids that we must now turn.

### *Ibn Ṭufayl as a Public Figure*

The venue for most of Ibn Ṭufayl’s work and writing seems to have been Marrakesh, and in particular the court of the Muwaḥḥids there. Cornell rightly stresses the importance of his move to the imperial capital in 542/1147,<sup>83</sup> and it is worth recalling that Ibn Ṭufayl was first and foremost

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74. The other is on p. 29: “And God created Adam in His own image,” which Ibn Ṭufayl uses as a buttress for the key Neoplatonic doctrine of the divine origin of the soul.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>79</sup> See Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), pp. 15–16. As Hawi points out (*Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, p. 83), Ibn Ṭufayl’s wording is—again—identical to that of al-Ghazālī in his *Miskhāt al-anwār*.

<sup>80</sup> Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Iḥāṭa*, II, 479.

<sup>81</sup> In his *Mu‘jib*, p. 174, al-Marrākushī cites four verses from such a poem, which had been read to him by Ibn Ṭufayl’s son from a manuscript written in his father’s own hand. This meeting occurred in Marrakesh in 603/1206.

<sup>82</sup> See below, pp. 135–36.

<sup>83</sup> See below, pp. 136–37.

a courtier of the caliph Abū Ya'qūb. Indeed, he was one of his master's closest confidants. He spent long sessions in private discussions with the caliph, and disposed of sufficient prestige and influence to attract scholars and men of letters to Marrakesh, where a word from him was apparently sufficient to gain one the direct attention of the caliph.<sup>84</sup> For a few areas relevant to his political and official role we are only tantalized by an occasional vignette to which nothing else can yet be added. Al-Marrākushī, for example, reports some ambiguous boasting by Ibn Ṭufayl with respect to music.<sup>85</sup> Does this mean that our author was himself adept at music, a highly developed and esteemed field in al-Andalus?<sup>86</sup> Or is he referring only to musical theory?

On other matters, however, we are rather better informed, if still obliged to argue from circumstantial evidence on certain matters of broader context. One of the most important of these areas is his role as a propagandist. We have already seen that he was an accomplished poet, the author of a vast mnemonic work on medicine and several pieces on ascetic and mystical themes. A further dimension of his poetic interests is reflected in two other works of a very different sort. One is a long and now-lost essay in rhymed prose (*saj'*) and verse on how "the 'Uthmānic Codex" (*al-muṣḥaf al-'Uthmānī*), the Qur'ān of the caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (r. 23–35/644–56), had made its way to Cordoba. Al-Maqqarī relates Ibn Ṭufayl's account of this legend on the authority of the latter's great-grandson and quotes Ibn Rushd as saying that he saw the essay copied on pages bound into the Qur'ān in question.<sup>87</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl also composed another long poem summoning the Arab tribes to the *jihād* and encouraging them to join the Muwaḥḥid forces then actively engaged in warfare against the Christians in the north. The poem, which survives in a copy made by Ibn Ṣāhib

<sup>84</sup>On Ibn Ṭufayl's public life and career, see al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, pp. 172–76; Ibn al-Abbār, *Muqtaḍab*, pp. 72–73; Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Mughrib*, II, 85–86; Ibn Abī Zar', *Rawḍ al-qirtās*, I, 127, 135; al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, IV, 37; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Ihāta*, II, 479–82; al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, I, 607; V, 337. The account in Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1968–72), VII, 134–35, is of no independent value since it is based on a recension by al-Dhahabī (d. 749/1348) taken from al-Marrākushī. The standard modern work remains Gauthier's *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 1–21. See also Bernard Carra de Vaux, *Les penseurs de l'Islam* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1921–26), IV, 56–65; Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 372–75; al-Manūnī, *Al-'Ulūm wa-l-ādāb wa-l-funūn*, pp. 97–99; Farrūkh, *Ibn Ṭufayl*, pp. 18–32; Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids."

<sup>85</sup>Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, p. 172.

<sup>86</sup>See Owen Wright, "Music in Muslim Spain," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, edited by Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 555–79; also the paper by Dominique Urvoy, pp. 49–50 below.

<sup>87</sup>Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, I, 607–15.

al-Ṣalāt, is in several ways typical of heroic poetry of this kind. Themes of martial glory abound, and the traditional boasting of the bard's tribe manifests itself in the way in which Ibn Ṭufayl magnifies his own clan of Qays, to which he even traces the lineage of Ibn Tūmart and the Muwaḥḥid caliphs.<sup>88</sup>

Of greater interest to us than the poems is their background. The caliph Abū Ya'qūb faced an increasingly serious Christian challenge from the north, and the better part of his reign, though prosperous, was marked by repeated efforts to turn back Christian campaigns into his realm, as well as several campaigns of his own to subject the remaining Islamic parts of Spain to his rule and seize key areas and towns of the northern marches. Indeed, it was in the course of one of these campaigns, the disastrous expedition against the city of Santarem in 580/1184, that the caliph lost his life.<sup>89</sup> In such a situation, the propaganda on both sides was of course quite intense. With the Reconquista in mind, Spanish Christian writers made use of Latin translations of the Qur'ān and of the teachings of Ibn Tūmart, as well as Arabic historical sources, to create their own virulently polemical version of Arab-Islamic history for popular consumption.<sup>90</sup> The Muwaḥḥids—and most particularly Abū Ya'qūb—mounted their own popular campaign through various means. The sole surviving manuscript of the teachings of Ibn Tūmart was copied in 579/1184, i.e. in the reign of Abū Ya'qūb, and it may be this caliph who undertook the compilation of these materials.<sup>91</sup> In any case, the book includes an appendix by him (or prepared at his command) on *jihād*, martyrdom in the cause of God, and dedication of one's material resources to the *jihād*.<sup>92</sup> The caliph also

<sup>88</sup>Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt, *Al-Mann bi-l-imāma*, pp. 411–15. The poem is translated into Spanish in Emilio García Gómez, "Una qasida inédita de Ibn Ṭufayl," *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos* 1 (1953), pp. 21–28. Cf. also Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, pp. 25–26.

<sup>89</sup>See Henri Terrasse, *Histoire du Maroc* (Casablanca: Editions atlantides, 1949–50), I, 321–24; Huici Miranda, *Historia política del imperio almohade*, I, 290–312.

<sup>90</sup>On this literature, see Benito Sánchez Alonso, *Historia de la historiografía española: ensayo de un examen de conjunto* (Madrid: Revista de filología española, 1941), pp. 130–36; Engracia Ferré, "Une source nouvelle pour l'histoire de l'Espagne musulmane," *Arabica*, 14 (1967), pp. 320–26; Anwar G. Chejne, *Muslim Spain: Its History and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), pp. 124–30; Pedro Chalmeta, "Arabia as Reflected in the Medieval Spanish Authors," in *Studia Arabica et Islamica: Festschrift for Iḥsān 'Abbās on His Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by Wadād al-Qaḍī (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), pp. 66–69.

<sup>91</sup>*Kitāb a'azzu mā yuṭlab*, edited by J.D. Luciani in *Le livre de Mohammed ibn Toumart, mahdi des Almohades* (Algiers: Imprimerie orientale Pierre Fontana, 1903), p. 401.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 377–400. On this Appendix, see Ignaz Goldziher, "Materialien zur Kenntniss der Almohadenbewegung in Nordafrika," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 41 (1887), pp. 81, 98–99.



urged his own scholars to turn to the historical record to defend and promote the faith by collecting narratives on the early Arab conquests,<sup>93</sup> and one such compendium, the *Kitāb al-ghazawāt* written in 575/1179–80 by Ibn Ḥubaysh (d. 584/1188), the *qāḍī* of Murcia, still survives to reflect the character of such Muwaḥḥid works.<sup>94</sup>

In composing works on the arrival of 'Uthmān's Qur'ān in al-Andalus and the glory and merit of fighting the infidels, Ibn Ṭufayl was participating in a more general imperial campaign to rally popular support behind the Muwaḥḥid caliph as a focus of Islamic rectitude and the heir to the venerable tradition of the Umayyads. In doing so he served a public function that in at least broad terms can be compared to that of Ibn Rushd. Though now best known to posterity as a great philosopher, in his own time Ibn Rushd's primary function was that of a prominent Mālikī jurist. He composed works of Mālikī jurisprudence as well as works of philosophy and a commentary on the *Creed* of Ibn Tūmart, and he served for many years as the *qāḍī* of Séville and then Cordoba.<sup>95</sup> It is worth observing that the work of his most relevant to our concerns here, the *Faṣl al-maqāl*, is in structure and argument essentially a Mālikī *fatwā*.<sup>96</sup> The careers of both scholars thus illustrate the facility with which one could take up different intellectual pursuits proceeding from widely different epistemological foundations, and involving apparently contradictory social and political agendas.

Ibn Ṭufayl's public activities should be viewed in terms of his probable role as a member of the *ṭalaba*, circles of scholars recruited by the caliph and awarded rank, stipends, and other privileges in return for their services. These included important roles in caliphal audiences and ceremonial, consultations in judicial cases, and in general promoting the caliph's legitimacy as a ruler whom one should obey and support. The *ṭalaba* were

<sup>93</sup> Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, p. 183.

<sup>94</sup> See D.M. Dunlop, "The Spanish Historian Ibn Ḥubaish," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1941, pp. 359–62. The text has recently been edited by Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1412/1992).

<sup>95</sup> On this important dimension of Ibn Rushd's career, see C.A. Nallino, "Intorno al *Kitāb al-bayān* del giurista Ibn Rushd," in *Homenaje á D. Francisco Codera en su jubilación del profesorado*, edited by Eduardo Saavedra (Zaragoza: Mariano Escar, 1904), pp. 67–77; Robert Brunschvig, "Averroes juriste," in *Etudes d'orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1962), I, 35–68; A.M. Goichon, "L'exégèse coranique d'Avicenne jugée par Averroès," in *Actas del primer congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos* (Madrid: Comité permanente del Congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos, 1964), pp. 89–99; Iḥsān 'Abbās, "Nawāzil Ibn Rushd," *Al-Abḥāth*, 22 (1969), pp. 3–63; Abdel Magid Turki, "La place d'Averroès juriste dans l'histoire du Mālikisme et de l'Espagne musulmane," *Multiple Averroès*, edited by Jean Jolivet (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1978), pp. 33–43; Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, pp. 34, 40–41, 64–68.

<sup>96</sup> See Hourani, *Averroes*, p. 19: "The subject whose status is in question is philosophy, but the treatise itself is not a philosophical work; it is a legal treatise *about* philosophy."

active in appealing for support and manpower for the *jihād*, as Ibn Ṭufayl certainly was, and their leaders were drawn into the caliph's innermost circle of advisors, again, as our author was. The caliph and his *ṭalaba* often engaged in long discussions of philosophical issues, and al-Marrākushī's account of Ibn Ṭufayl's introduction of Ibn Rushd to the caliph is for all intents and purposes identical to audiences orchestrated around the *ṭalaba* as the ruler's representatives of the best that Islamic learning had to offer.<sup>97</sup> Such audiences were essentially forms of the time-honored *munāẓara*, a public session of interrogation and debate, often assuming a question-and-answer format of the kind Ibn Rushd describes for his introduction to the Muwaḥḥid caliph by Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>98</sup> Such sessions had been convened by the Fāṭimids from the first days of their victory in North Africa, and appear to have been prominent in Mālikī circles there in later times.<sup>99</sup> For present purposes, the significance of the *munāẓara* is that it provides a probable interpretation of such audiences at the Muwaḥḥid court. It also suggests that Ibn Ṭufayl, almost certainly a leading member of the *ṭalaba*, played an important role as a dialectician and public propagandist for the regime.

In dealing with Ibn Ṭufayl, then, we do not have to do with, as was once thought, a recluse who lived a life somehow similar to that of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, shunning human society and pondering the mysteries of the cosmos in isolation. And in light of the broad range of his activities and commitments, it is all the more difficult to characterize him in terms of the traditional categories of either medieval Islamic culture or modern scholarship. In assessing the influences that shaped his tale, it is therefore essential to bear in mind that the author was an individual of many varied and sometimes conflicting interests and commitments, and one fully immersed in the vibrant but tempestuous social scene of al-Andalus and the western Maghrib under the early Muwaḥḥids.

### *Sources and Influences*

In several important works on Islamic culture in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib under the Muwaḥḥids, Dominique Urvoy rightly stresses the crucial role that social structures, political factors, and broad cultural perceptions played in defining and shaping the sort of works that scholars produced in this era. These works, he therefore argues, cannot be rightly

<sup>97</sup> Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids," pp. 8–12.

<sup>98</sup> See George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), pp. 109–11, 128–52.

<sup>99</sup> Paul E. Walker, *Religion and State in the Fāṭimid Empire*, Chapter 6, forthcoming. I am grateful to the author for providing me with a copy of this material prior to publication.

understood unless such elements are taken into consideration.<sup>100</sup> What, then, do we find if we seek the influences and sources bearing on Ibn Ṭufayl as he wrote *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*? The topic is too rich and varied to be addressed fully here, but as numerous points bearing on this question are raised in the papers in this volume, some introductory remarks may serve to contextualize the question and highlight the trends that emerge.

At the most general level one may consider Urvoy's proposal in his own contribution for what he calls the "rationality of everyday life," a broad tendency in Andalusian culture for cultural expression to reflect a pronounced concern for order. What *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* represents is a stage of philosophical reflection in which more general trends to pursue in increasing articulate forms the rationality of taste and the organizational rationality of thought and aesthetics culminate in the proposition that all orders of experience are essentially rational.<sup>101</sup> In advancing these hypotheses Urvoy wishes to propose no caesura with the East, and how far one might press them remains to be seen. But certainly one can see such a pattern in the Muwahḥid system in general, which was dominated by the starkly rational and practical theology of Ibn Tūmart<sup>102</sup> and a political order that compartmentalized its functionaries within a strict hierarchy of knowledge, power, influence, and privilege.<sup>103</sup> If Ibn Ṭufayl was, as this writer has recently proposed, a leading figure in the *ṭalaba*, one of his most important public functions must have been to uphold this sense of order and rationality insofar as it promoted the spiritual rectitude and political legitimacy of the Muwahḥid regime.<sup>104</sup> What he thought of this state of affairs himself is of course another matter, but it is not to be supposed that any work written by such a visible public figure as Ibn Ṭufayl could have escaped scrutiny and the obligation to conform to the canons of the prevailing order.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup>In addition to his work on Ibn Rushd, already frequently cited above, see his *Le monde des ulémas andalous du V/XIe au VII/XIII siècle: étude sociologique* (Geneva: Droz, 1978); *Pensers d'al-Andalus*.

<sup>101</sup>See below, pp. 38–51. This paper pursues the brief remarks on this subject in his *Ibn Rushd*, p. 53, where he proposes that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is the most consciously expressed example of the widespread notion that "it was possible to grasp through reason the whole of human existence down to its most everyday aspects."

<sup>102</sup>See Urvoy's "La pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin des études orientales*, 27 (1974), pp. 135–65.

<sup>103</sup>Still useful is J.F.P. Hopkins' "The Almohade Hierarchy," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 16 (1954), pp. 93–112.

<sup>104</sup>Cf. the remarks by Urvoy below, p. 41.

<sup>105</sup>Mohammed Arkoun rightly observes that the renown of Ibn Ṭufayl and the exceptional importance of the works of Ibn Rushd and Maimonides tend to divert the attention of modern scholars from "le climat inquisitorial le quel ces esprits ont travaillé." See his "Présentation d'Ibn Ṭufayl," in his *Pour une critique de la raison islamique* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1984), p. 330.

The Muwaḥḥid authorities enforced an inspection system in which works written with official support or patronage were assessed before their wider circulation was allowed, and even such apparently innocuous books as Ibn Zuh'r's *Al-Taysīr fī l-mudāwāt wa-l-tadbīr*, a treatise on therapy and dietetics, and Ibn Rushd's *Al-Kullīyāt fī l-ṭibb*, a compendium on medicine, had to be revised on their way through this evaluation procedure.<sup>106</sup> Given Ibn Ṭufayl's close relations with the caliph, high official position, and broad learning, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he must have played some role in these assessments: it is known that when he referred to "my official responsibilities" (*ishtighālī bi-l-khidma*) this included the commissioning of works by other scholars, such as Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle, so one may reasonably conclude that he was also involved in evaluating them.<sup>107</sup> At the least, it may be taken as certain that he could not have written a work that would have flown overtly in the face of this system.

The obligation to work within such a system must have been confining in important ways, but it did not prevent a wide range of cultural and literary influences from reaching our author. Quite a few of these can be regarded as aspects of general culture and popular lore. One will notice straightaway that certain motifs and themes in *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* are inspired by the Qur'ān. The image of the infant cast adrift on the sea and guided to a safe haven by God<sup>108</sup> is taken straight from the Qur'ānic story of Moses,<sup>109</sup> and the way in which Ḥayy is inspired to bury the dead gazelle, his foster mother,<sup>110</sup> derives from the Qur'ānic version of the story of Cain and Abel.<sup>111</sup>

There are also numerous more general borrowings of Qur'ānic locutions or phrases, some of which have evoked comment in the papers in this volume. There is of course nothing remarkable in the fact that a Muslim intellectual should make use of either Qur'ānic quotations or phraseology inspired by Islamic scripture—such practices were exceedingly common. But Ibn Ṭufayl's use of the Qur'ān is noteworthy in two respects. As noticed by Christoph Bürgel, he often uses quotations in a sense different from or even contradictory to that of their generally acknowledged context

<sup>106</sup> See Nemesio Morata, "La presentación de Averroes en la corte almohade," *La Ciudad de Dios*, 93 (1941), pp. 101–22. Cf. Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, pp. 40–41, with reference to the commentaries by Ibn Rushd on Aristotelian philosophical texts. Morata's important study seems not to have gained notice elsewhere.

<sup>107</sup> Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, p. 175.

<sup>108</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>109</sup> Sūrat Ṭāhā (20), vs. 39; Sūrat al-Qiṣaṣ (28), vs. 7. See the discussion by Fedwa Malti-Douglas below, pp. 57–58; also Fradkin, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*," p. 102.

<sup>110</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, p. 46.

<sup>111</sup> Sūrat al-Mā'idā (5), vss. 33–34.

in the Qur'ān.<sup>112</sup> A passage on how the pagan unbelievers in Mecca in Muḥammad's time wander astray like cattle,<sup>113</sup> for example, is turned by Ibn Ṭufayl, through Ḥayy, into a judgment against the believers on Absāl and Salāmān's island, and hence against the generality of Muslims of simple literal belief in the world of our author.<sup>114</sup> It is also noteworthy that Qur'ānic quotations and allusions do not occur randomly through the text. While the deployment of Qur'ānic motifs tends to be more erratic, direct recourse to Qur'ānic vocabulary and phraseology is concentrated in certain passages of special importance, such as Ḥayy's culminating vision of the Necessary Being<sup>115</sup> and his realization on Absāl's island that he will not be able to lead the common folk to the heights of mystical vision that he himself has experienced.<sup>116</sup> Such passages not only alert us to the special importance Ibn Ṭufayl seeks to attach to the material in question, but also demonstrate his command of Islamic scripture and remind us once again of the public side of his professional career.

It is also possible to see sources for the text in the popular lore of Ibn Ṭufayl's day, for the vignettes that from time to time appear in medieval Islamic literature, especially of the more popular and informal variety, suggest that some of the primary motifs revolving around the persona of Ḥayy were "in the air" in the medieval Islamic world. Several such tales are discussed by contributors to this volume,<sup>117</sup> and another that has traditionally attracted attention is Baltasar Gracián's seventeenth-century Spanish tale *El Criticón*. Here the sage Critile falls from a ship and swims to a nearby island, where he finds a young man who cannot speak. Once he teaches the youth how to do so, it emerges that he has no parents and had been nursed and raised by a wild beast in a cave on this otherwise uninhabited island; like Ḥayy, his contemplations had led him to consideration of the marvels of the natural world, the harmony of all being, and the giver of this harmony, God. Gracián could not have modelled his tale on that of Ibn Ṭufayl, as *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* was not known in Christian Europe until it was published by Pococke in 1671, while Gracián's work had already appeared by 1650. Investigations by García Gómez established that the two texts had a common source, an anonymous *Hikāyat Dhī l-Qarnayn* surviving in an Escorial manuscript.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>112</sup>See below, pp. 129–30.

<sup>113</sup>Sūrat al-Furqān (25), vs. 44.

<sup>114</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 147.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 120–21.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 150–53. Cf. below, pp. 249–50.

<sup>117</sup>See, for example, the comments by Remke Kruk and Christoph Bürgel, pp. 75 n. 35, 130 below.

<sup>118</sup>Emilio García Gómez, "Un cuento árabe, fuente común de Abentofáil y de Gracián," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, 47 (1926), pp. 1–67, 241–69 (with an edition

Turning to the ascetic side of the picture, it seems clear that Ḥayy's character is fleshed out in terms of a melange of deeds and attributes ascribed to various Andalusian mystics, ascetics, and pious recluses. Ḥayy's perennial fasting, for example, would in the al-Andalus of Ibn Ṭufayl's day recall the 40-year fast of Ḥafṣ ibn 'Abd al-Salām al-Sulamī of Saragossa (d. early third/ninth century),<sup>119</sup> and his habit of venturing forth from his cave only once a week for food<sup>120</sup> finds an interesting precedent in the similarly reclusive practice of Abū l-'Ajannas of Cordoba (d. early third/ninth century).<sup>121</sup> As Cornell points out, the character of Ḥayy may be at least partly based upon figures belonging to a local tradition in his native Wādī Āsh, or upon the extremely reclusive Moroccan ascetic Abū Ya'zā (d. 572/1177), who was a renowned personality in Ibn Ṭufayl's own time and a leading Ṣūfī in the illuminationist tradition.<sup>122</sup> Finally, Ḥayy's chastity (enforced of course, but apparently willingly) echoes a common variation on the theme of the ascetic renunciation of worldly pleasures.<sup>123</sup>

If such sources demonstrate that many elements and motifs in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* were already familiar ones in Islamic society in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in Ibn Ṭufayl's time, the fact remains that as an eminent scholar the influences upon him from more formal literature would probably have been even more important. One of these sources may well have been the *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā',<sup>124</sup> the transmission of which to al-Andalus can be dated to at least as early as the fifth/eleventh century, and possibly to the fourth/tenth century.<sup>125</sup> A few allusory remarks were offered some years ago,<sup>126</sup> and more recently similarities of narrative tech-

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of the Arabic text on pp. 265–69). Cf. also Gauthier, *Ibn Thofa'il*, pp. 50–54; Antonio Pastor, *The Idea of Robinson Crusoe* (Watford: Gongora Press, 1932), pp. 126–44; Hasanali, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," pp. 120–22.

<sup>119</sup>Ibn al-Faraḍī (d. 403/1013), *Ta'rīkh al-'ulamā' wa-l-ruwāt li-l-'ilm bi-l-Andalus*, edited by 'Izzat al-'Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1373–74/1954), I, 139 no. 365.

<sup>120</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 138–39.

<sup>121</sup>Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Ta'rīkh al-'ulamā'*, I, 352 no. 911.

<sup>122</sup>See below, pp. 155, 158–61.

<sup>123</sup>Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 216 no. 546, 373–74 no. 975; II, 85–86 no. 1336.

<sup>124</sup>See Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: an Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā')* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982).

<sup>125</sup>Maribel Fierro, "Bāṭinism in al-Andalus: Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurtubī (d. 353/964), Author of the *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* and the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*," forthcoming (I am grateful to Dr. Fierro for advice on this matter, and for providing me with a draft copy of her article in advance of publication). Cf. also Emilio García Gómez, "Alusiones a los 'Ijwān al ṣafā' en la poesía andaluza," *Al-Andalus*, 4 (1936), pp. 462–65.

<sup>126</sup>Susanne Diwald, *Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Enzyklopädie Kitāb Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' (III). Die Lehre von Seele und Intellekt* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), pp. 17, 55.

nique have been noted.<sup>127</sup> In this volume Remke Kruk suggests possibilities of a direct influence. Ibn Ṭufayl refers, for example, to the purity and durability of certain minerals in the same way as the Ikhwān, and he deploys the same system of animal classification and the Platonic “chain of being” that one finds in the *Rasā'il*. The image of Ḥayy covering himself with leaves evokes a motif also used by the Ikhwān, and the account of the boy's possible spontaneous generation on the island tallies with the Ikhwān's doctrine that the first male and female of every species were spontaneously generated from clay.<sup>128</sup> As Kruk points out, it may well be significant that in this context Ibn Ṭufayl refers to how “our blessed forefathers” describe “a certain Indian island, situated on the equator, where human beings come into being without father or mother. This is possible, they say, because, of all places on earth, that island has the most tempered climate, because a supernal light streams down on it and brings it into the right condition.”<sup>129</sup>

Another source of influence is likely to have been the thinking of the Mu'tazila, a point raised briefly in the contribution by Bernd Radtke.<sup>130</sup> Mu'tazilite thought reached al-Andalus at least as early as the third/ninth century, carried by students who had studied under the pupils (e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, d. 255/868) of such great Baṣran teachers as al-Nazzām (d. 231/845).<sup>131</sup> The case for a distinctly Mu'tazilite “school” in al-Andalus is controversial, and certainly the alleged connections with Ibn Masarra have little direct evidence to recommend them.<sup>132</sup> But Ibn Ṭufayl often does argue in a decidedly Mu'tazilite fashion. His formulations on the noncorporeality of the Necessary Being, which insist on denying Him extension or sensible attributes, are clearly Mu'tazilite, as also is his argument for the identity of God with His positive attributes.<sup>133</sup> But his most profound debt to the Mu'tazila may be seen in his use of the argument from design. An argument already used very effectively in the Qur'ān,<sup>134</sup> it became one of the main

<sup>127</sup> Arkoun, “Présentation de Ibn Ṭufayl,” p. 337.

<sup>128</sup> See below, pp. 70, 72, 74, 78, 84.

<sup>129</sup> See below, pp. 84–85. The quotation is from *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 20.

<sup>130</sup> See below, pp. 191–92, 194.

<sup>131</sup> See Asín Palacios, *Ibn Masarra y su escuela*, pp. 27–30, 34–35, 100–101, 173–84; Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 211–14; Hourani, *Averroes*, p. 7; Fierro, *Heterodoxia*, pp. 91–93, 111–13, 140–42, 155–56, 166–68.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, p. 4. Ibn Ḥazm gives an impression of prominent Mu'tazilite influence, but makes it clear that previous to his own time speculative theology had been a poorly developed field of study in al-Andalus. See his *Risāla fī faḍl al-Andalus*, p. 186; also p. 11 above.

<sup>133</sup> See Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 202–205; Hans Daiber, *Das theologisch-philosophische System des Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbād as-Sulamī (gest. 830 n. Chr.)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975), pp. 198–203.

<sup>134</sup> In Sūrat al-Raḥmān (55) alone, the argument from design is invoked no less than 31 times in a Sūra of only 78 verses.

formulations of the Mu'tazila and a theme pursued with great vigor by al-Jāhiz and many others. It was a powerful polemical weapon in the struggle against Manichaeism, and asserted that the physical world revealed such order, harmony, and unity of purpose as to comprise decisive proof of the guiding hand of a single benevolent and just Creator and giver of order.<sup>135</sup> This perspective is absolutely essential to Ḥayy's progress, for the validity of the argument from design comprises Ibn Ṭufayl's central premise as he pursues the development of Ḥayy in a milieu in which the phenomena of the natural world are his only source of guidance. This argument is thus implicit throughout the course of Ḥayy's development, and is often asserted in very explicit terms, most vividly when Ḥayy discovers the existence of the Necessary Being:

When Ḥayy realized that all that exists is His work, he regarded it in a way different from the way he had viewed it previously, now seeing things as manifestations of their Maker's power and marvelling at His wondrous handiwork, benevolent wisdom, and inscrutable knowledge. In the most trivial things of the material world, not to mention in the greater things, he discerned signs of wisdom and wondrous workmanship that made further amazement impossible and proved to him that this could only have its origin in a Maker of consummate and boundless perfection.<sup>136</sup>

And here again a medical dimension appears, for in Ibn Ṭufayl's case corroboration of the validity and relevance of the Mu'tazilite argument from design would have been forthcoming from his professional training, which would have exposed him to the systematic elaboration of Galenic theory on the harmony and utility of the various parts of the body.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup>On this conflict, see Michelangelo Guidi, *La lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo*, the Introduction to his edition and translation of al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860), *Al-Radd 'alā l-zinqīq al-la'īn Ibn al-Muqaffa'* (Rome: Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1927), esp. pp. 24–25. The most illustrative example of the argument from design, sustained at length, is the pseudo-Jāhizian tract *Al-'Ibar wa-l-i'tibār*, edited by Wim Raven (forthcoming). On the work, see H.A.R. Gibb, "The Argument from Design: a Mu'tazilite Treatise Attributed to al-Jāhiz," in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, I, edited by Samuel Löwinger and Joseph Somogyi (Budapest: Globus, 1948), pp. 150–62; Daiber, *Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbād as-Sulamī*, pp. 159–60.

<sup>136</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 88. For other explicit assertions of the point, see pp. 44, 51, 56, 56–61, 88–89, 90, 99–100, 106, 138. Cf. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 208–12.

<sup>137</sup>See, in particular, Galen's *De usu partium*, edited by Georg Helmreich (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1907–1909); translated by Margaret Tallmadge May as *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968). A specific link between the program of the Mu'tazila and the intellectual movement that witnessed the translation of large numbers of Greek medical texts into Arabic in the third/ninth



If one examines Ibn Ṭufayl's use of his medical sources and knowledge more closely, however, some unexpected patterns begin to emerge. The careers and writings of the many learned physicians from al-Andalus and the western Maghrib leave no doubt as to the vitality and sophistication of medicine in this part of the medieval Islamic world.<sup>138</sup> But in what is the first serious assessment of Ibn Ṭufayl as a physician, Lutz Richter-Bernburg demonstrates in this volume that in writing *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* he abandons some of the focal doctrines and concepts of the Galenic tradition so central to medieval Islamic medicine. His account of the spontaneous generation of Ḥayy, for example, represents an integration of al-Ghazālī's reading of the Qur'ānic account of the creation of Adam into an Aristotelian system of biology.<sup>139</sup> His embryology and human ontogeny use the Neoplatonic idea of emanation to fuse Aristotelian psychology and the Qur'ānic doctrine of the creation of man, and similarly, to seek a common ground between Ṣūfism and Islamic Aristotelianism. The centerpiece of this program is his insistence on the primacy of the heart as animal life's most vital organ and the seat of the Aristotelian vital spirit. Here again al-Ghazālī proves to have been a crucial influence, with adherence to his formulations involving nothing less than the abandonment of Galen's neuroanatomy and his doctrine of the primacy of the brain.<sup>140</sup> In anatomy, physiology, and use of the hepatic scheme Ibn Ṭufayl likewise forsakes major points of medical thought in favor of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic arguments.<sup>141</sup> Richter-Bernburg's conclusions can be summarized as demonstrating that in his discussion of medical matters in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, Ibn Ṭufayl presents himself not as a physician and an adherent of Galen, but as an Aristotelian philosopher and a follower of al-Ghazālī. Here it is of course important to recall his role and function at the Muwahḥid court.

A similar pattern emerges from Ibn Ṭufayl's treatment of Ṣūfism and his use of mystical literature. In studies also marking major advances in areas previously neglected in the study of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, Vincent Cornell and Bernd Radtke raise in this volume the question of how Ibn Ṭufayl's work relates, in both cultural and literary terms, to the mystical tradition that flourished in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in his time. As already mentioned above, a very significant advance is marked by Cornell's discov-

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century has been proposed in Lawrence I. Conrad, "Arab-Islamic Medicine," in *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, edited by W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), I, 689–96.

<sup>138</sup>For a useful collection of biographies and texts, see Muḥammad al-'Arabī al-Khaṭṭābī, *Al-Ṭibb wa-l-aṭibbā' fī l-Andalus al-islāmīya* (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1988).

<sup>139</sup>See pp. 97–99 below.

<sup>140</sup>See pp. 99–106 below.

<sup>141</sup>See pp. 106–113 below.

ery that Ibn Ṭufayl figures in a chain of authorities that establishes formal and apparently illuminationist Ṣūfī roots for him in the circles around al-Ghazālī, or more specifically, around the latter's brother Aḥmad.<sup>142</sup> But as in medicine, what appears upon further investigation is not a figure rooted in the mainstream tradition, but again, an anomaly. This can be seen through comparison of Ibn Ṭufayl's thinking to that of Ibn al-'Arīf (d. 536/1141), a great Ṣūfī master who had been born and raised in the same part of al-Andalus that produced our author. In certain areas the two would have agreed: their rationalist outlook on religion and the human condition in general, and a conviction that knowledge (*'ilm*) and practice (*'amal*) are both essential to the mystic. As Cornell rightly observes, one could hardly hope for a more accurate description of Ḥayy's solitary existence on his island and his later friendship with Absāl than that provided by Ibn al-'Arīf in his unpublished *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*:

For one trained in the discipline of the Truth, the friendship of beasts is more beloved than the friendship of men. He obliges himself to flee and to live in caves and satisfies himself [only] with one who befriends him for the sake of religion alone.<sup>143</sup>

Such pronouncements of course echo in a more formal way the popular stories about ascetics and mystics that would have been available to Ibn Ṭufayl, and may also have been influential in shaping the presentation of his solitary hero.

But Ibn Ṭufayl's system was not Ibn al-'Arīf's, nor would it have been generally acceptable within *shar'ī* Ṣūfī circles. Ibn al-'Arīf, for example, condemned philosophy as a "blameworthy method," and stressed that the Ṣūfī novice's essential goal in his worldly life is to find an absolutely reliable teacher, for otherwise the unguided *murīd* would ultimately commit the blasphemy of identifying some aspect of contingent being with God. Indeed, had Ibn al-'Arīf (and probably others as well) been able to see the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, his comparison of Ḥayy and Absāl undoubtedly would have led him to the conclusion that the latter's adherence to a religiously grounded spiritual method and reliance on a teacher made him the more practical and more enlightened of the two.<sup>144</sup> While Ibn Ṭufayl's views may relate to a local tradition in his native region in al-Andalus, and are in other ways similar to the Maghribī illuminationist tradition represented by Abū Ya'zā, his work is not that of a typical Maghribī Ṣūfī or solitary ascetic, but of a philosopher.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>142</sup>See below, p. 136.

<sup>143</sup>See below, p. 152.

<sup>144</sup>See below, p. 154.

<sup>145</sup>See below, pp. 163–64.

These findings are complemented by those of Bernd Radtke, who focuses his attention on the doctrine of ontological union, which is central to Ibn Ṭufayl's mysticism. This concept of the identity of the divine spark in man with the essence of God is essentially a matter of cognition, and a comparison of our author's thinking with the theory of cognition in philosophy, mysticism, and theology should tell us much, not only about the sources that influenced him, but also about his place within these systems of thought.

Again, a number of important anomalies appear. Ibn Ṭufayl's true predecessors in upholding the doctrine of the divine spark were the philosopher al-Kindī, the Shī'ī *ghulāt*, and the early Ṣūfīs, but it is unlikely that he was familiar with any of these. Contrary to the claims of Ibn Sīnā, classical Ṣūfism of the third–fifth/ninth–eleventh centuries did not uphold a doctrine of ontological union, nor did it use the term *ittiḥād*. The world view of classical Ṣūfism was “creationist” and considered that the union with God involved the passing away of a created being (man) into a real being (God). Ibn Ṭufayl's “emanationist” world view therefore sets him apart from earlier Ṣūfīs, even those whom he quotes; he adopts their terminology, in other words, but not their system. Indeed, his ideas may have been influential in the formation in the following century of the thinking of his fellow Andalusian Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1230), which was monist rather than “creationist.”<sup>146</sup>

In places where Ibn Ṭufayl can be said to have had specific sources, these were works not by mystics, but by philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī who were influenced by mysticism and made use of its ideas in their own philosophical thinking. Here again examination of an aspect of Ibn Ṭufayl's thought brings us back to *falsafa*, and, once more, to al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā. Entire sentences and even longer passages are sometimes taken up from the writings of these two scholars for incorporation into *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, and of these several are of special importance. Ibn Sīnā's *Al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* and al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār* account for most of Ibn Ṭufayl's crucial description of the mythical union, and al-Ghazālī's *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* comprises not only a rich source of ideas, but also a framework for the story of Ḥayy's encounter with Absāl and sojourn on his island. Beyond these major sources, the papers in this volume point out numerous other works that Ibn Ṭufayl probably read, or if not, was at least familiar with ideas from them. These include, for example, Ibn Sīnā's *Al-Shifā'*, thinking from which is noticed by Remke Kruk,<sup>147</sup> and al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' ‘ulūm al-dīn*, ideas from which are observed by Radtke.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>146</sup>See below, p. 194.

<sup>147</sup>See below, pp. 75, 85, 86.

<sup>148</sup>See below, pp. 179, 181.

Two especially interesting precedents of a more formal nature are associated with the name of Ibn Sīnā. The first is a tale of *Salāmān and Absāl* which exists in two different forms, a Ṣābi'an Harrānian text once thought to be a late antique Hermetic account translated into Arabic (allegedly by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, d. 260/873),<sup>149</sup> and a story of the same title by Ibn Sīnā, who probably knew the earlier work, though his own is very different.<sup>150</sup> In these works, and especially in the latter, one finds not only the names of Salāmān and Absāl, but also the themes of estrangement from the company of women, the rescue and nurturing of the vulnerable hero by a wild animal, and a personal disillusionment with society that resolves itself through retreat to solitude and contemplation of God.<sup>151</sup> The other tale is Ibn Sīnā's own *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. This work provides the name of Ibn Ṭufayl's hero, as also the formal framework of a story told by a narrator who launches into his account in response to requests by his "brothers" for an account of Ḥayy. One might also see an influence in the notion of a sacred territory involved in some vital way with the quest of the hero, and the theme of the voyage in search of the truths of the cosmos: a physical journey in Ibn Sīnā's case, and an intellectual and mystical one with Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>152</sup> Both *Salāmān and Absāl* and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* contribute a profoundly allegorical cast to Ibn Ṭufayl's presentation, and in his work, as in its predecessors, the primary theme is that of the relation between man, God, and the Active Intellect.<sup>153</sup>

In assessing Ibn Ṭufayl both as a physician and as a mystic, we are thus led back to Islamic philosophy, and in particular to Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī. While we might thus agree that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is a "philosophical tale," this does not make either the author or the work any easier to understand,

<sup>149</sup>See N. Peter Joosse, "An Example of Medieval Arabic Pseudo-Hermetism: the Tale of Salāmān and Absāl," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 38 (1993), pp. 279–93.

<sup>150</sup>These differences cannot detain us here, but one might begin with the fact that in the Harrānian tale Absāl is a woman and the beloved of Salāmān, while in Ibn Sīnā's account Absāl is a royal prince and Salāmān his older brother. While there is no reason to believe that Ibn Ṭufayl knew the Harrānian account, his reliance on Ibn Sīnā's version seems beyond dispute.

<sup>151</sup>See Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 73–83; Henri Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 204–41; Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 94–96.

<sup>152</sup>For the text of Ibn Sīnā's work, see A.F. Mehren, *Traité mystique d'Abou 'Ali Hosain b. 'Abdallah b. Sīnā ou d'Avicenne* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1889–99), pp. 1–22. Among the best studies are Amélie-Marie Goichon, *Le récit de Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān commenté par des textes d'Avicenne* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959); Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 123–64, 279–381; Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna*, pp. 44–48, 153–65, 170–79.

<sup>153</sup>See, for example, Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 72, 86. More recent scholarship has not altered this conclusion.

for at the level of *falsafa* Ibn Ṭufayl's work also poses problems. The problem here seems to be that in appropriating pieces of text that suit his purposes, he does not hesitate to deploy them in ways that the original authors had never intended, or as we have seen, with results they would have categorically rejected.

In some cases he seems not to have realized the existence of such a difficulty in the first place. Perhaps the most extraordinary example of this is his quotation of a line of poetry from al-Ghazālī's *Munqidh*:

It was what it was, but not to be expressed;  
Enquire no further, and think of it the best.<sup>154</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl cites this verse with reference to the sublime state of mystical gnostic experience,<sup>155</sup> which is also the context in which al-Ghazālī had deployed it. But the line is actually by the 'Abbāsīd poet Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908), the artistry and beauty of whose verse made him one of the few "modern" poets genuinely appreciated by philosophers engaged in the study of rhetoric and poetics; and as anyone familiar with Arabic poetry could have told Ibn Ṭufayl, in this line the poet speaks not of fulfilling religious experience, but of the ecstasies of sexual intercourse with his beloved.<sup>156</sup> This verse was frequently used by Ṣūfī writers, but for such a line to be quoted by Ibn Ṭufayl, whose work suggests that he had difficulty coming to terms with his own sexuality,<sup>157</sup> is remarkable indeed, and indicative of a readiness to take up choice ideas and phrases from sources with little regard for their true sense and original meaning.

That Ibn Ṭufayl was willing to proceed in this fashion even with his most central sources has recently been demonstrated by Muhsin Mahdi in an article that is ostensibly a survey of Arabic philosophical literature, but in fact is primarily a critique of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Here Mahdi points out that on al-Fārābī Ibn Ṭufayl, *inter alia*, attributes things to him which he did not say, ignores points that might attenuate his critique, fails in his Aristotelian commentaries to distinguish al-Fārābī's own views from those of Aristotle, and misses nuances that could account for problematic passages. In speaking of Ibn Sīnā he makes much of the need to get beyond the superficial sense of things to their deep meaning, but offers no views

<sup>154</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl wa-l-wuṣūl ilā dhī l-'izza wa-l-jalāl*, edited by Jamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil 'Ayyād (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1967), p. 108.

<sup>155</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 4. My translation here is based on Ockley.

<sup>156</sup> Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Dīwān*, edited by Michel Nu'mān (Beirut: Al-Sharika al-lubnāniya li-l-kitāb, 1969), p. 219.

<sup>157</sup> This is discussed by Fedwa Malti-Douglas and Lutz Richter-Bernburg, pp. 60–68, 107–109 below. Cf. also Fradkin, "Ibn Tufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," pp. 144–48, 174.

on how one is to tell these two apart, and in sum seeks to avoid addressing any of the accusations that al-Ghazālī had made against philosophy and philosophers in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. In the account of al-Ghazālī, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* essentially presents him as “having done everything Ibn Ṭufayl insists should not be done,” while in reality Ibn Ṭufayl follows al-Ghazālī in very important ways, derives major passages from his works, and makes use of argumentative techniques deployed successfully in al-Ghazālī’s works (e.g. discussing Ibn Sīnā together with Aristotle). He speaks of al-Ghazālī’s consignment of the “plain truth” to “esoteric” books without also commenting on the similar statement by Ibn Sīnā, and operates on the false assumption that more esoteric books are necessarily more ambiguous.<sup>158</sup>

Lutz Richter-Bernburg rightly observes that modern research can easily be led astray by what medieval authorities say about an author and his work.<sup>159</sup> It may well be that irrespective of our author’s reputation in later circles as a philosopher, his knowledge of this subject was neither his primary strength nor the basis for his position at court. Indeed, the evidence suggests that his rise to prominence should be put down to his medical abilities, which gained him the caliph’s attention and his post as the ruler’s personal physician, and his skills as a dialectician and propagandist, which probably resulted in a high position among the *ṭalaba*. And whatever his limitations as a philosopher, these would have to be viewed in light of the problem already discussed above, the precarious status of philosophical studies in general in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib.

### *Issues of Literary Form*

Little has so far been said about the important question of literary form in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, an issue rendered particularly problematic by the interplay of so many features—as already seen above—that seem complementary in some ways, but contradictory in others. There is, of course, much more to be considered than simply what kind of book this is. Approaching the text from numerous intellectual perspectives, the contributors to this volume have enormously enriched our understanding of the literary aspects of Ibn Ṭufayl’s classic; the editor’s own paper will seek to show how the diverse interpretations that emerge here and elsewhere actually react to the book in much the same way that the author had intended. Here, however, attention will be focused briefly on a few general points essential to any consideration of the literary dimensions of this text.

<sup>158</sup>Mahdi, “Philosophical Literature,” pp. 98–103. Cf. Michael E. Marmura, “The Philosopher and Society: Some Medieval Arabic Discussions,” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 1 (1979), pp. 303–23; also Urvoy’s comments, p. 45.

<sup>159</sup>See below, p. 91.

In asking what validity can be claimed for aesthetic qualities and how it sustains a concern with the Truth, Salim Kemal seeks to explain and justify Ibn Ṭufayl's choice of a "philosophical tale" as his mode of expression. As in Goodman's English translation, the text is taken up here by a philosopher addressing the task of philosophy rather than its history. Developing his case from Ibn Sīnā's commentary on the *Poetics* of Aristotle, Kemal argues that the various poetic devices and forms deployed in literary expression ultimately depend for their success on using something akin to the four basic syllogistic forms, and provide the criteria by which the meaning and rationality of the aesthetic use of language may be judged. Ultimately, "poetic and literary utterances have a logical form which follows the pattern of demonstrative reasoning."<sup>160</sup> While it is true that as a text considered aesthetically, *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* possesses a validity that in important respects must be viewed independently from the validity claimed for the Truths it advances, aesthetic validity can be shown to be relevant to the latter. Indeed, it can be demonstrated that an aesthetic form does not militate against the philosophical validity of its content, and that in the case of Ibn Ṭufayl's work, the aesthetic form of a "philosophical tale" is naturally appropriate to the Truths he seeks to communicate. Kemal thus provides both an articulate framework within which the text may be considered, and a clear explanation of what it does and does not mean when one refers to the book, with Goodman, as a "philosophical tale." It is important to note that this framework allows for further development to accommodate, for example, Arkoun's description of the work as an autobiography,<sup>161</sup> or Bürgel's view of *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* as an initiational tale.<sup>162</sup>

One of the most important literary-critical threads that winds through the papers in this volume is the theme of conflict and complementarity. As Malti-Douglas argues, *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* repeatedly manifests a fundamental ambivalence and refusal to choose between conflicting options.<sup>163</sup> A principle of duality is introduced with the narration of two very different accounts of Ḥayy's birth,<sup>164</sup> and to her observations it may be added that even if one entertains the possibility that one version or the other may have been introduced during an official vetting process prior to general circulation of the text, the fact remains that throughout the book one witnesses processes of articulation and resolution of conflictual dualities of various kinds.

Some of these are explicit in the text; others would have been clear to an educated readership, which must of course have comprised the book's

<sup>160</sup>See below, p. 202, 207, 216.

<sup>161</sup>Arkoun, "Présentation d'Ibn Ṭufayl," pp. 333–34.

<sup>162</sup>See below, p. 132.

<sup>163</sup>See below, p. 61. This is a major argument throughout her paper.

<sup>164</sup>See below, p. 60.

audience. It has been noted above, for example, that there are major anomalies in the ways Ibn Ṭufayl expresses himself in all the fields of greatest personal or professional importance to him—philosophy, Ṣūfism, and medicine—and in his handling of Qur'ānic phraseology and motifs. Two more illustrations may be cited as indicative of the broad range of other cases that could be mentioned. First, though Ibn Ṭufayl's thinking often seem rather abstract, this is countered, as both Urvoy and Kruk have observed, by an emphasis on the ordinary experience of everyday life,<sup>165</sup> and, in the natural sciences, on the strictly practical knowledge that one would expect from, say, farmers, hunters, or falconers, but not from natural philosophers.<sup>166</sup> Second, Ḥayy's quest for the Necessary Being, based on his powers of empirical observation, rationality, and mystical spirituality, seems to enjoy extraordinary success, but is marked by repeated recourse to paradigms of complementarity and conflict: the animals on the island, his first companions and teachers, are eventually abandoned and exploited; his foster-mother, savior, and nurturer—the gazelle—is dissected soon after her death;<sup>167</sup> and even the Necessary Being is finally confronted by Ḥayy's identification of some aspect of contingent being (himself) with the absolute, a blasphemy from which he is saved only by the direct intervention of the Necessary Being.<sup>168</sup> The only relationship that does not end this way is that with Absāl, who returns with Ḥayy to his island as his disciple (i.e. definitely not as his equal).

Especially germane, at this point, are the important observations on the text's intentionality made by several contributors. That is, in many cases where Ibn Ṭufayl makes problematic or noteworthy comments, it is perfectly clear that he could have steered clear of the difficulty had he so wished. These places thus mark not inadvertent errors, but rather represent the conscious design of their author. It was Ibn Ṭufayl's specific intent, for example, to use literary and poetic discourse as a vehicle for the presentation of philosophical Truths.<sup>169</sup> The hero would not have hit upon a cardiocentric system had his creator not wished him to do so.<sup>170</sup> Had Ibn Ṭufayl wished to argue for absolute solitude as essential to con-

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<sup>165</sup>See below, pp. 38–51.

<sup>166</sup>See below, pp. 70, 71, 74.

<sup>167</sup>Negative connotations should not, however, be read into this based on assumptions of an Islamic abhorrence of dissection; Islamic society had no particular objection to this, and it was in fact common where animals were concerned. See Emilie Savage-Smith, "Attitudes Toward Dissection in Medieval Islam," *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 50 (1994), pp. 67–110.

<sup>168</sup>See below, p. 253.

<sup>169</sup>Below, p. 220. Urvoy suggests that in this decision he may have been influenced by al-Ghazālī; see p. 46 below.

<sup>170</sup>See below, p. 106.



templative bliss, he could have left Ḥayy and Absāl on separate islands.<sup>171</sup> Any criticism of such passages must thus go beyond identification of their problematic aspects to discussion of their implications as part of the overall whole as Ibn Ṭufayl intended it to be.

The determination of precisely what it was that Ibn Ṭufayl intended to say confronts the critic with the problem addressed by Christoph Bürgel: how is one to mediate esoteric truths—and controversial ones at that—to an audience through linguistic means? Our author says that he will seek to express himself through *ramz* and *ishāra*, and in doing so pursues a venerable tradition of symbolic and figurative expression in Islamic literature.<sup>172</sup> A rich variety of devices was available: at times symbolic language was simply allusory, at others it involved the couching of hidden truths through allegorical expression. A dichotomy between a literal sense (*ẓāhir*) and an esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) could be deployed, and in yet other instances one could—as Bürgel sees in the case of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*—typify “the general through the particular, the universal through the individual.”<sup>173</sup> In the hands of a skilled storyteller, such options open possibilities of leaving it to the reader to seek his or her own archetype, as it were; and if this is the case, is it valid to evoke a sense of “intended” meaning in the first place? The world of Ḥayy is, after all, a profoundly mythic one, and the work relating his story thus allows for multiple layers and modes of interpretation: as a commentary on the plight of the philosopher in the western Islamic lands in the medieval period, but then again, as a vision of male utopia.

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These remarks, and the papers to follow in this book, will hopefully serve to indicate the complexity of what is certainly one of the most interesting literary figures of medieval Islamic times, and the richness of a unique text in classical Islamic literature. There remains, of course, much more to be said about both the author and his work. And ironically enough, one of the questions that this book does not answer is the one that stimulated the convening of the symposium in the first place: “What is *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* really about?” My own suspicion is that Ibn Ṭufayl would have been amused to watch us discuss this question, but also pleased to see his work finding appreciative reception among such a diverse circle of critics, with each discovering in it something fresh and meaningful from his or her own personal or disciplinary perspective. Such is, after all, the hallmark of great literature.

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<sup>171</sup>See below, p. 67.

<sup>172</sup>See below, pp. 117–22.

<sup>173</sup>See below, p. 125.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE RATIONALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE: AN ANDALUSIAN TRADITION? (APROPOS OF ḤAYY'S FIRST EXPERIENCES)

Dominique Urvoy

(Université de Toulouse)

Ibn Ṭufayl's famous tale *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* describes the intellectual and spiritual quest of an isolated individual motivated *only* by the strength of his reason, this in and of itself linked *only* to his biological structure, and finally, with this latter being influenced *only* by his contact with his own physical surroundings. The proposition we propose to consider here is that this is actually a fully consistent experience.

It is well known how virulently Marx denounced those studies that, following in the footsteps of Locke in England and Condillac in France, attempted to explain the formation of ideas in terms of the intrinsic structure of the individual. In calling such works "Robinsonades," he, like Daniel Defoe himself, did so based on the suspicion that such arguments would serve to justify capitalist individualism. But these formulations were not only false, they were false because they sprang from a false perception.

It is also to be observed that Defoe himself implicitly justified these reproaches when he wrote:

I pledge my word that the story (i.e. Robinson's), in spite of being allegorical, is real: it is the magnificent perception of a life filled with unparalleled misfortunes and with a variety that is unequalled in the world, it is intended for and genuinely suited to humanity's common good; its first aim and the purpose that we are pursuing for it today are that it should be used in the most serious possible way.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Defoe, *Serious Reflections during the Life of Robinson Crusoe*, cited here in the French translation by Francis Ledoux, *Vie et aventures de Robinson Crusoe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p. 591.

The author thus manifests here the quite distinct precursor of something that, after an initial success, essentially due to the many and various peripeteia of the tale, was only to appear clearly with the publication of J.J. Rousseau's *Emile*: namely, the description of the self-made man, extending from experiences linked to his most everyday needs up to the realms of religion.

This is not exactly what the Cambridge professor of Arabic, Simon Ockley, the first English scientific translator of the tale, saw in *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*. In 1708, eleven years before *Robinson Crusoe*, he gave his rendering the revealing title: "The improvement of human reason... in which is demonstrated by what methods one may, by the mere light of nature, attain the knowledge of things natural and supernatural; more particularly the knowledge of God." But one might already query this reading in view of the fact that Ockley's insistence on the phrase "by the mere light of nature" goes further, for example, than the thinking of Edward Pococke, who, in preparing the first edition of the Arabic text and a Latin translation in 1671, entitled his work: *Philosophus autodidactus... in qua ostenditur quomodo ex inferiorum contemplatione ad superiorum notitia ratio humana ascendere possit*, "The philosophus autodidactus... in which it is demonstrated by what means human reason can ascend from contemplation of the inferior to knowledge of the superior." It would perhaps be useful to recall that Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, published in 1690, lies exactly halfway between these two "readings" of Ibn Ṭufayl. The same idea of the "improvement of human reason" is what underlies the research for Locke's *Essay*. Moreover, the tone differs between speaking of "knowledge of things natural and supernatural," which simply depends on defining the realms of reason, as Locke does, and describing the ascension of the mind *ex inferiorum contemplatione ad superiorum notitia*.<sup>2</sup>

Briefly put, Ockley's reading is that of Defoe with respect to the sudden turns of fortune in his hero's life, in that both authors invite us to ask: "What would I have done in his place?"<sup>3</sup> The reading of Pococke, on the other hand, is not so much psychological as methodological: "Which stages must be experienced?"

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<sup>2</sup>On the reception of Ibn Ṭufayl's work by Locke and others in seventeenth-century England, through Pococke's Latin translation, see G.A. Russell, "The Impact of the *Philosophus Autodidactus*: Pocockes, John Locke, and the Society of Friends," in *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by G.A. Russell (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 224–65.

<sup>3</sup>We might note in passing that this makes *Robinson Crusoe* the first modern English novel, forming a sharp contrast with earlier impersonal "romances" that only recounted a series of adventures. Henceforth, environment and prevailing circumstances were to have a direct influence on the hero's behavior.

Marx's critique is thus no longer as pertinent to the older of these readings as it is to the second, which is quite in keeping with the spirit of capitalism. In fact, it is well known that in his *German Ideology* Marx criticized the philosophers in two areas. First, none of them thought to ask themselves what the link is between philosophy (German in this case, in those authors mentioned by Marx) and reality (also German); that is, what is the link between their critique and their own natural environment? Second, man is first and foremost a corporeal being and distinguishable from animals when producing his means of existence, a process that is itself conditioned (*bedingen*) by corporeal organization.<sup>4</sup> Even had Pococke's vocabulary ("inferior"/"superior") been impugned by Marx, he set out to reply to an objection of the same kind as that formulated by the German author in the first place; in reality, Ibn Ṭufayl appears to have been the first author in the history of philosophy to ask himself the question of the "conditions of possibility" of thought.

The second question remains, and for Marx this is based on the actual affirmation of the doctrine of historical materialism. If Pococke, who only preceded triumphant capitalism by a few years, escapes Marx's criticism, what would have been the case for Ibn Ṭufayl five centuries earlier? More exactly, once the Andalusian author had raised the question of conditions of possibility, would he really have constructed his work of fiction with no further concern about knowing what it is that structures the development of thought? It is obvious that he did not express the hypothesis of historical materialism, but does this mean that he had nothing in its place? Can it be said of him that not only is this a question without an answer, but further, that there is no question at all?

The hypothesis summarized in our title—"the rationality of everyday life"—is that Ibn Ṭufayl did not sidestep this difficulty, even if in his time it was not clearly expressed. Having asked himself the question: "How does thought manifest itself?" he also asked himself: "What is structure?" But instead of moving towards the idea of production (of the means of existence *and* of thought), he chose another solution: the most humble experience is already, by itself, structured like a thought.

This idea did not come from Ibn Ṭufayl himself; it came from the *mahdī* of the Muwaḥḥids, Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130). I will not recapitulate here an analysis of this latter's thinking,<sup>5</sup> but the essential contribution of this author must be borne in mind. With regard to theological problems he broke away from the empirical argumentation of the *mutakallimūn*—who

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Karl Marx, *German Ideology*, Part I; Feuerbach, *L'idéologie en général et en particulier l'idéologie allemande*.

<sup>5</sup>See Dominique Urvoy, "La pensée d'Ibn Tūmart," *Bulletin d'études orientales*, 27 (1974), pp. 19–44.

based themselves on the revealed Text, the structure of the Arabic tongue, and common opinion given form by the senses—in order to set down the exclusive necessity of reason (*darūrat al-‘aql*) in a way that is close to the *falāsifa*, even if his problematics are not theirs. The paradox for a religious reformer is that basing himself on the exclusive intrinsic necessity of logical inference (principally on the existence of a Creator emanating from that of a contingent object), Ibn Tūmart eliminated the historical necessity of Revelation. This is why the Muwaḥḥid system established a hierarchy of the Faithful according to ability, reserving authority for the great masses who were incapable of grasping the logic of the ‘*aqīda* of the *mahdī*, but leaving for the elite the privilege of seeing in the Qur’ānic quotations that appear there only the illustration (and also the confirmation, perhaps?) of what can be discovered by pure reason.

It is of course this view that is presented in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, principally with the confrontation of Ḥayy and Absāl.<sup>6</sup> Then the question subsists: if the main point of the tale corresponds to the act of the Muwaḥḥid profession of faith, what is one to make of the whole scientific, psychological, and cosmological raiment that “clothes” Ibn Tūmart’s very austere thoughts? In particular, what is to be said with regard to the observation of nature, principally of medical science, which expresses the actual profession of the author? In fact, the great difficulty in understanding the *falāsifa* subject to Muwaḥḥid strictures is to see how they have been able to take up Ibn Tūmart’s idealistic mathematical-style argument (similar to that of Saint Anselm or Descartes) within a system that claims kinship with the naturalistic empiricism of Aristotle. As for Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), who distributed subjects according to a table of contents, the question is fairly difficult,<sup>7</sup> but for Ibn Ṭufayl, perhaps the framework of his tale will simplify the task for us.

The first paragraphs of the narrative of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* describe the birth of the character, then the series of experiences that together enable him to survive and form his ideas. On this problem of experience we have to do, schematically speaking, with two opposing epistemological viewpoints. The better known one is that embodied in the *De rerum natura* of Lucretius, principally in Book V, lines 1091–1135 and 1241–1457. Here the operative thesis is that chance supplies man with all his discoveries; all he need do is reproduce the observed sequence of phenomena in order to obtain the same result. Lucretius remains somewhat vague with regard to these sequences and merely outlines the schemas, sometimes even providing several for one explanation. His aim was not scientific explanation in itself, but rather the

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>7</sup> See Dominique Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd (Averroes)*, translated by Olivia Stewart (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 69–89.

struggle against superstition, so all he needed to do was to find a purely immanent sequence of events.

On the other hand, in his *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (1949) Gaston Bachelard emphasized that a crude observation cannot lead to a discovery. In the objectivistic explanation he denounced the pretension "to gain by recurring evidence,"<sup>8</sup> which consists of judging "by inference based on a known science, without reliving the conditions of the original observation."<sup>9</sup> In order for there to be a discovery, there must be anticipation by the mind, an a priori perception that at the most will only be confirmed by sentient experience. Bachelard sought the source of these anticipations in psychoanalytic forms—transgression of taboos, sexualized perception of facts, and so forth—which he synthesized under the principle of the "supremacy of the agreeable over the necessary."<sup>10</sup>

The narrative of Ḥayy's experience oscillates in a peculiar way between these two extremes. Ibn Ṭufayl is tempted by Lucretius' argument: the discoveries of the garments of skin, of the burial place, of the fire, of the burnt flesh, etc., are explicitly attributed to the factor of chance. The notion of a multiplicity of hypotheses is also one to which he had no particular objection, as can be seen from the fact that he begins his narrative with two entirely different accounts of how Ḥayy came to appear on the island.

But in other respects, Ibn Ṭufayl is diametrically opposed to Lucretius' reductivist argument. For him it is not a question of showing that everything can have an inherent explanation; rather, it is a question of encouraging the functioning of the mind, enabling it to reveal its own laws. In this way Ibn Ṭufayl draws nearer to Bachelard's idea of anticipation, for on several occasions he shows his readers that it is not crude fact that teaches—"fact" replies to questioning of a different nature.

A first example is provided by the question of sexual modesty. Ibn Ṭufayl does not see in this a conventional phenomenon; it instead arises from the comparison that Ḥayy makes between his own body and those of animals. At the same time, he notices his inferiority with regard to both his nudity and his natural means of action. But the indices of these two phenomena are totally different: those of physical inferiority are empirical, while that of nudity is symbolic, as the vocabulary used by the author shows.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>G. Bachelard, *La psychanalyse de feu* (Paris: repr. Gallimard, 1965).

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>11</sup>Several other contributors to this volume comment on the significance of sexuality to Ibn Ṭufayl; see the discussions by Fedwa Malti-Douglas and Lutz Richter-Bernburg (pp. 68, 107–109 below).

Ḥayy states that the natural orifices of animals are "hidden" (*mastūra*, from the root *s-t-r*, "to conceal from view"); this, as well as his relative physical handicap by comparison to the animals, "afflicts him and torments him."<sup>12</sup> The form of words is important because it poses the question of inventiveness that was not explicitly dealt with by the psychology of previous *falāsifa*, a psychology that was limited to the process of abstraction or imagination and was led to refer to a kind of revelation (revealed by chance!) in order to explain innovation.

Sexual modesty and its symbolic consequences were to be the principal originators of invention: the choice of leaves as a covering is firstly due to circumstance, but they engender the idea of using branches as weapons against animals. This possibility of attacking the weaker and defending oneself against the stronger gives rise to the idea of "power." This can be seen in concrete form in the comment that the hand is superior to animals' claws because it enables one to clothe oneself as well as to carry weapons. Thus the symbolic function is, at the very least, coterminous with the utilitarian function.

A second example is to be found within the complex episode concerning the dissection of the mother gazelle after its death. This dissection is carried out in part by trial and error, based on the subject's own previous experience: wounds that had already been sustained, for example, or the reflex experience of protecting the chest as a priority. Naturally this description takes up one of the medical traditions that Ibn Ṭufayl might have had at his command, but the vocabulary should not deceive us; the experience only refers to the necessity of reason. The author uses expressions such as "it occurred to him..." (*waqa'a fī nafsihi...*)<sup>13</sup> and "it became practically certain to him..." (*kāna yağhlibu 'alā ḡannihi ḡhalaba qawīya...*)<sup>14</sup> for things that are not stated, but that can be deduced.

Thus when it comes to the question of the privileged point, namely the heart (in the Aristotelian cardiocentric tradition), reason is easily overturned and the analogy becomes negative. Ḥayy notes that the heart of the gazelle has one cavity full of clotted blood and another one that is empty; as the blood is everywhere the same, he concludes that what he seeks is not this, but something that has its proper place in the heart. But on the other hand, he perceives the heart above all as a perfect organ (Ḥayy first noted its specially protected position, elegant shape, sturdiness, and firmness); as the empty ventricle consequently cannot be useless, it must have contained something that is now gone. Here we have a negative inference of exactly

<sup>12</sup>Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, edited and translated by Léon Gautier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), pp. 35–36.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40; cf. also p. 49 (twice).

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40; cf. also pp. 46, 48.

the same type as that which, in Ibn Tūmart's *'aqīda*, leaves the creature in order to reach some other God. Ibn Ṭufayl extends this naturally by saying that to Ḥayy the body seems to be a base being in comparison with that being whose dwelling place he is certain he has located. Here again, the vocabulary is significant, for Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that Ḥayy is "deeply convinced" (*i'taqada fī nafsīhi*: he has formulated his *'aqīda*)<sup>15</sup> that the thing in question dwelled there for a time, and then left. This is obviously no longer an abstraction, since there is no object, but a genuine mental construct.

Certainly this anticipatory argument is not clearly theorized by Ibn Ṭufayl. It is not even completely conscious, since it alternates with repetitions of the objectivist hypothesis, and it is only through the typically Muwaḥḥid vocabulary that we can adduce it in evidence. It is fundamental, however, since it explains why the subject not only is receptive, but also proceeds ahead of the object, even in the ordinary argument of abstraction. Immediately after the passage just summarized, the author continues by describing his hero as "concentrating his mind (*iqtaṣara 'alā l-fikra*) on this thing."<sup>16</sup> What is it? What is it like? What binds it to the body? And so forth. Afterwards the way ahead is completely free for the rest of the argument, where Ḥayy will purely and simply construct the concepts even before any experimentation.

The *in vivo* dissection episode is characteristic in this regard, because it strongly recalls Ibn Rushd's completely rationalist and non-empirical medical conception.<sup>17</sup> The same ambiguity of a formal recognition (regard for Aristotle's authority) of observation (*nazar*) is found there, but this is greatly tempered by the simultaneous exigency for reflection (*fikra*).<sup>18</sup> One might also express certain doubts about the empirical character of these observations, which reveal vapors in the heart that resemble a mist (*dabāba*) and which enable us to conclude (*fa-ṣaḥḥa 'indahā*) that it is this vapor that animates the animal. On the other hand, one understands better that these alleged observations serve to arouse desire for the study (*taḥarrakat fī nafsīhi al-shahwa li-l-baḥth*) of the organization (*tartīb*) of the limbs, their places (*awḍā'*), their numbers (*kammīya*), the ways they are joined together, and so forth—all concepts we shall find again further on in another context.<sup>19</sup>

If only because of the crucial character of the two experiences we have just examined in Ḥayy's story, it can be seen that the question of the

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45; also p. 49.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>17</sup> Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd*, pp. 41–54.

<sup>18</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān*, pp. 50–51.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.



form that the mind's thought processes assume<sup>20</sup> is central. One can then wonder what provoked in Ibn Ṭufayl this still obscure need to go beyond the psychology of his predecessors. This question assumes an even sharper edge in view of the fact that it links up with that of the real reasons why our author borrowed the title *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* from Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). Whatever interpretation is given to the latter's narrative, be it rationalist (like that of Anne-Marie Goichon), or esoteric (like that of Henri Corbin), it remains clear that Ibn Sīnā's account belongs to a context different from that of the Andalusian author.<sup>20</sup> Ibn Sīnā begins by describing how his hero transcends his sentient faculties in order to deal almost immediately with the realm of the intelligible. Why did Ibn Ṭufayl complicate his task by replacing this narrative framework with that of a novel,<sup>21</sup> a marvellous one indeed, but one that obliged him to describe the most humble forms of the spirit? This break can only be intentional, especially since, unlike Aristotle, who in his *De anima* follows the appearance of the functions of the soul step by step from sentient facts, Ibn Sīnā, as early as his exoteric works, was quick to give the celebrated "flying man" argument a place in his psychology, which enabled him straightaway—or nearly so—to situate himself on the level of the certainty of existence.

A preliminary hypothesis may be put forward: that of the influence of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). In the preface to his novel Ibn Ṭufayl speaks of him in an ambiguous way; he contrasts his work, intended for the common folk, with his profound thought, without knowing how to say where this is, and raises several contradictions among his various writings. He nevertheless concludes that one must follow al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā in conjunction with one another in order to attain truth, first by *naẓar*, and then by *dhawq*.

Here the meaning of *naẓar* is quite obviously "theoretical reflection" and not "observations" (any more than it is above), but what does this word mean for al-Ghazālī himself? If the esoteric works of doubtful attribution are excluded, it becomes apparent that al-Ghazālī has a quite remarkable argument that combines the two senses indicated, while not, however, returning to the empiricism of the *mutakallimūn*. While condemning those aspects of *falsafa* which to him seem to be contrary to religion, he reinstates certain aspects of it at another level. The case of logic is simple: he makes it the subject of two opuscula, and it is used widely here and there, either as a basis for *uṣūl al-fiqh* or for polemic. But if we take the case of ethics (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*), we see that while as a jurist al-Ghazālī is not able to give it a specific status outside of *fiqh*, certain fundamental problems of this branch of instruction nevertheless recur surreptitiously. It is in this way, for

<sup>20</sup>For a fuller discussion, see the comments by J. Christoph Bürgel, p. 130 below.

<sup>21</sup>Cf. E. Garcia Gomez, "Un cuento arabe: fuente comun de Abentofail y de Gracian," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, 30 (1926), pp. 1-67.

example, that the question of free will, which lies at the very heart of the concept of "improvement of character" (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, the title of the works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, d. 363/973, and of Miskawayh, d. 421/1030), is reintroduced in the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* in order to resolve the very concrete problem of carnal concupiscence. There is no possibility of moderation if the tendency (*khulq*) is like the substance created (*khalq*) and incapable of change.<sup>22</sup> Other examples could be adduced, but would not be relevant in the present context.

If it is therefore difficult to know what Ibn Ṭufayl really sought to take up from al-Ghazālī, one can at least consider that he found in his work that very specific argument that serves to make the philosophical problematic spring forth from the most concrete experience, or even the most banal. But this is not enough: al-Ghazālī demonstrates the need to return to everyday experience; he does not illustrate the teaching of it. In the example given above, the consideration of concupiscence leads one to pose the question of whether it might be overcome; it does not say what to do, and the solution is found in exegetical analysis (of the traditions ascribed to Muḥammad, *ḥadīth*, calling for improvement; the Qur'ān itself is composed of injunctions, advice, and the like, which presuppose the possibility of improvement).

Ibn Ṭufayl had the additional idea that everyday experience itself can be intrinsically rational. It would seem that this sentiment on the part of our author finds support in other contemporary works. It is thus, for example, that it appears just beneath the surface in a book of quite a different type, a treatise on cookery. While the eastern lands of Islam have left us rich documentation of culinary practice, in Islamic Spain we must wait until the Muwaḥḥid era for recipes to become the subject of large compilations. But they could then be promoted to an intermediate rank between, on the one hand, works that might most properly be described as dealing with medical dietetics—one example is the *Kitāb al-aghdiya*, or "Book of Nutrition," by Ibn Zuhri (d. 596/1199), which considers recipes, condiments, and drinks from the angle of diet and hygiene—and on the other, the popular pharmacopoeia, a simple compilation with no rules guiding the selection of items for inclusion. It seems that the largest of these culinary compendia gives no less than five hundred recipes,<sup>23</sup> which is many more than in similar works from the East. The work has been preserved for us in a seventeenth-century manuscript to which the copyist has not hesitated to add a short treatise on medical drinks and preparations that the editor considers to have come

<sup>22</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Cairo, AH 1322), pp. 48–50, 64–84.

<sup>23</sup> A. Huici Miranda, "Kitāb al-ṭabīkh fī l-Maghrib wa-l-Andalus," *Revista des Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid*, 5 (1957), pp. 137–56 (Spanish translation and index); 9–10 (1961–62), pp. 15–256 (Arabic text).

from a different source. Nonetheless, we can feel the spirit in which the work was received and which, together with its simple style, without literary pretensions, with numerous Andalusian usages and grammatical errors, renders it somewhat akin to popular treatises.

However, another meaning comes to light in the composition of the work. This must remain oversimplified, and sometimes a recipe is to be found in a category that would appear to us today to be inappropriate, but the principle behind the organization of the work can still be discerned. The compiler devotes approximately the first quarter of the book to the successive study of forcemeats, grilled meats, and ragouts and stews. After this he offers reflections on dietetics and prescriptions, to which we will return, and this introduces, in no apparent order, the descriptions of various dishes for which there are different recipes. In this long passage, which makes up a quarter to one third of the book, although it is presented in a purely objective way, a clear awareness of a typical phenomenon of Muslim civilization shows through: that is, the development of certain recipes when they pass from one way of life to another (peasant stews or bedouin dishes based on semolina, to which town dwellers add meat, fat, etc.) or from one social level to a higher one (the phenomenon of ostentatious consumption). In order to delve more deeply into an analysis that has only been hinted at, quotations from authors and indications of formulas peculiar to Cordova, Seville, and the west of al-Andalus are then given. The last quarter of the work returns again to the way things are set out in the beginning: fish (including some final remarks on the difficulty of digesting it), panadas, couscous, rice, etc, stews accompanied by green vegetables, and finally sweetmeats are examined in succession. All the same, it is possible that it was the need to make a link with the extra added chapter concerning medical linctuses that explains this division into two parts of the continuous examination of the types of dishes, and that in the original version the two end parts that correspond to each other, on the one hand, and the long series of supplementary reflections, on the other, were respectively placed together.

The latter bear the mark of a double heritage. One, that of culture, is that of an Umayyad arrangement, codified by the famous Ziryāb. But this only occurs at the end of the short passage that is, strictly speaking, normative of the work.<sup>24</sup> This is introduced in an abrupt way by the evocation of a Hippocratic dietetic maxim and Galen's commentary upon it. For all that, there is nothing there that one could consider to be copied from a contemporary medical treatise. It is a distant heritage, placed under the authority of the greatest names of medicine, but which does not depart

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-86.

from considerations of food quality: the determination of what is inherently the best, and not in accordance with the passions, which comes onto the question of choice, certain products being exclusive of certain others, or even of all the others. Rather than talking of an ascendancy of medical knowledge over the culinary sphere, we should be speaking of an extension of the systematic spirit of the first to the second. The link, doubtless an unintentional one between the two, is maintained by the repeated insistence on hygiene in methods of preparation and maintenance of instruments.

It can be seen that what *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and this culinary treatise have in common is the idea that it is possible to apprehend rationally the totality of human life, including its most mundane aspects. It is not by chance that Ibn Ṭufayl's work is a literary one, for his other priorities notwithstanding, the ideal of *adab* endures, just as the compiler of our culinary anthology has managed to outline—in spite of the extreme dullness of his style—a sort of historical background for his literary genre. Here he indicates the various Persian sovereigns, then the later caliphs and sultans, who have written on the subject, and recapitulates further on expressions from the book by the anti-caliph Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī and from the Muwaḥḥid notable Ibn al-Muthannā. Conversely, it can be said that to a great extent the spirit of compilation lived on in Ibn Ṭufayl.

We are therefore led, however imperceptibly, toward aesthetics and taste. This corresponds to the analysis of Bachelard, who sees in the mind's potential for anticipating experience the mark of the preeminence of the agreeable over the necessary. Thus the last hypothesis that can be expressed is the following: Is not this idea of the rationality of everyday life, which allows Ibn Ṭufayl to show his hero now and again constructing experience instead of being subject to it, due to the Andalusian cultural tradition?

If we have found a similarity between the spirit of the first paragraphs of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and a culinary compilation where Ziryāb's influence is felt, should we not return in time to this personality, who imposed himself upon Andalusian mentality from the time of his arrival in the Peninsula in 207/822 until his death in 243/857? And how far does his influence throw light on our subject?

We must distinguish two kinds of cultural contributions that he made: an innovation of a trivial kind, but that was immediately widely circulated, namely within the realm of fashion and luxury customs, and another one that is less obvious but far more profound in its impact.

Historians have accorded great importance to the "Institute of Beauty" that he founded,<sup>25</sup> as well as to the calendar of dress that he established.

<sup>25</sup>E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane* (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve, and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1950–67), I, 271.

But in the long term these had rather negative consequences: men of religion condemned this luxury, as much in the decadent caliphate period at the end of the tenth century as in the many small princely courts of the eleventh. The subsequent establishment of Berber power gave rise to more austere fashions: the spread of the turban, originally a distinctive sign of men of religion, and of the woolen burnous, set aside originally for ladies of high society when they rode their mules.

In the same way, we need not spend too much time on the culinary recipes introduced by Ziriyāb, which were challenged by Berber contributions, nor on the introduction of tablecloths and new utensils; of greater significance is the fact that he established a sequence for meals: "Dishes were no longer to be served pell-mell; one should begin with the soups, continue with the meat entrées and highly seasoned poultry dishes, and finish with the sweet dishes. . . ." <sup>26</sup> It is indeed difficult to appreciate the extent of the rationalization that was being attempted here. It is possible, however, to perceive Ziriyāb's ideal by referring to the other main aspect of his work: music.

The addition of a fifth string to the lute is attributed to him, as is a modification of the material from which the plectum and the strings were made, in order to make it into a concert instrument. But above all, it was by creating a teaching framework that he was able to give to Andalusian music, which up to then was very closely connected to music from the Eastern school, from which Ziriyāb himself stemmed, the impetus that allowed it to assume its own form. Whereas before him teaching only took place by practical example, he divided the pupil's curriculum into three parts: rhythm, meter, and the words of a song were learned first of all with an accompanying instrument, then the melody in its simple form, and finally the "effects." A whole pleiad of musicians, including Ziriyāb's own children, were to make this method bear fruit.

These Andalusian aesthetics found their most perfect form in the secular music known as *nawba* (nouba) which spread outside Spain and to the Maghrib at the beginning of the twelfth century, with Abū l-Ṣalt of Denia (d. 529/1134). He is principally known as a scientist and philosopher, but he was also a musician, as was his contemporary Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139), and doubtless it is one of the main fruits of Ziriyāb's heritage that Andalusian musical theory is not only a science, as in the East, but also an art. Right up to the present day, the *nawba* is composed according to a strict order: the vocal prelude (*dā'ira*), the instrumental prelude (*mustakhbir*), the overture (*tūshiya*), and five movements (*maṣdar*, *baṭayḥ*, *darj*, *insirāf*, and *khalāṣ* or *mukhlāṣ*), each preceded by an introduction called a *kursī*.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

In the eleventh century the Andalusian rhythmic modes were still the same, or at least had the same names, as in the East, but the modal system was different and seems to have been modelled on that of the Greeks through the Mozarabic church. There are four main modes from which nineteen branches are derived, plus one other main mode without derivative. The use of 24 modes was combined by Ziryāb with a cosmological and physiological symbolism, unfortunately still little known through lack of documentation, so as to make up the 24 *nawbāt*, a term improperly used here to designate the movements.

Finally, the concert proceeded according to the rules decreed by him for educational methods: one began with the vocalized song, either rhythmic or otherwise (*nashīd*), one then continued to the song on simple rhythms (*basīt*), and ended with the *ḥarakāt* or *hazajāt*, which are more or less complex rhythms performed at an increasingly rapid pace. The instrumental innovations gave the orchestra autonomy; it could thus offer purely instrumental pieces, while recourse to the choir (*al-murshidūn*) was systematized. One can in truth speak about a system of style that was thus worked out.

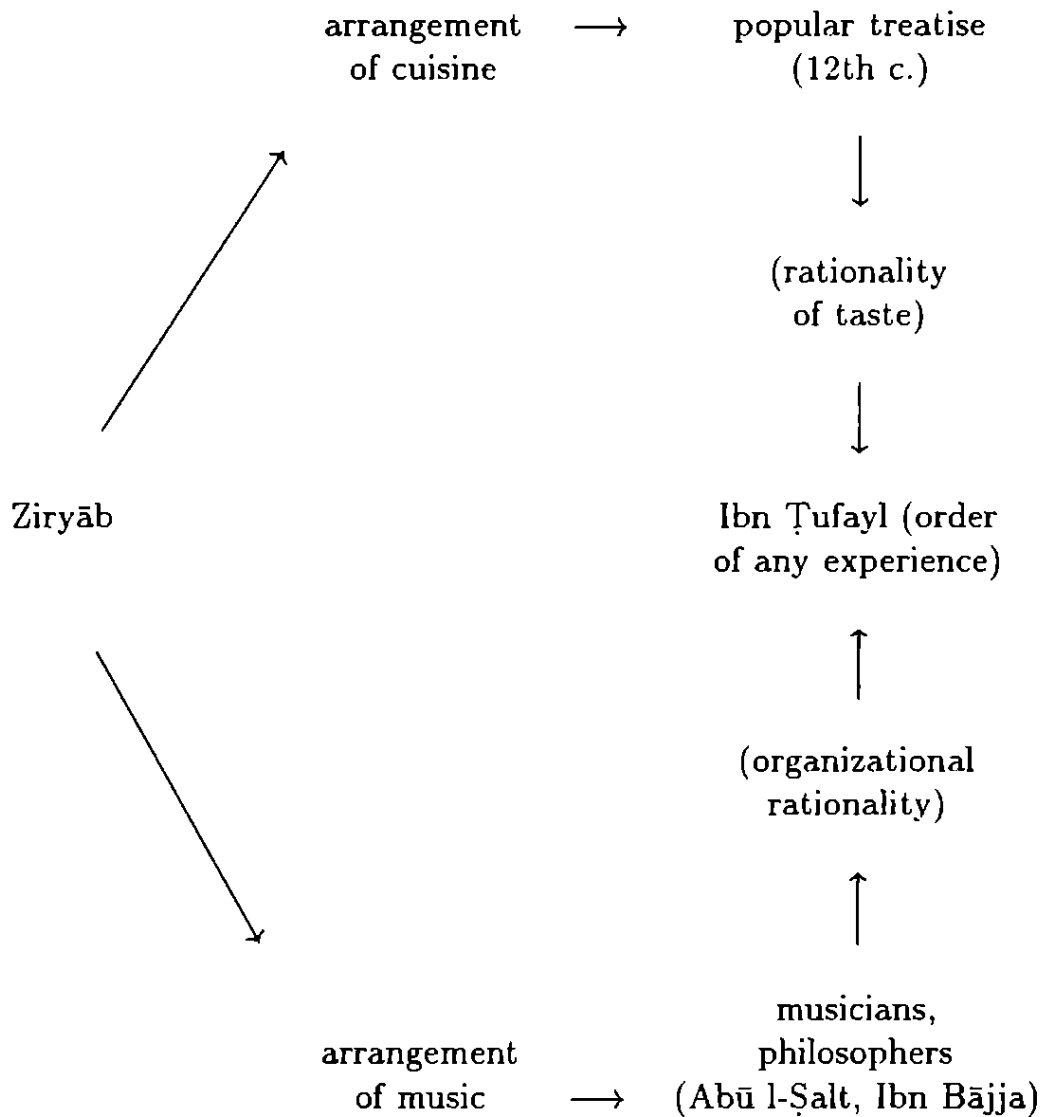
The most remarkable thing was that it managed to invade the most traditional spheres. In the recital of the Qur'ān, for example, the eastern style remains unaware of pre-established rules, either for the rhythm or for the melody. The rhythm is that of the spoken work, and is stressed either by using the grammatical rules for long syllables or by *gruppetti* of notes; the sentences are cut up according to the singer's breathing in a singsong that has neither beginning, tonal affirmation, nor ending on a recognized cadence. On the other hand, the Andalusian method, which in the twelfth century spread throughout the entire Maghrib, where it is still maintained,<sup>27</sup> consciously makes use of the inherent characters of the eight modes that it has incorporated, in an extremely varied effect. It expresses itself as a decorative fixed theme with figures that are both rhythmic and melodic, and which are very close to the arabesque in the decorative arts, but which above all, with each one repeated every time that the same word is used, make up genuine leitmotifs. Moreover, all this is without the slightest detriment to religious expression, the embellished recitation remaining fundamentally a prayer.

These examples give us the impression of a very "pensive" civilization where the idea of "order" was dominant. Artificial at the beginning, this order becomes natural for someone who is raised within it. It is certainly very difficult indeed to appreciate the impact of these frameworks on minds, and one is often tempted to emphasize the aspects of Arab civilization that

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<sup>27</sup>See J. Caniteau and L. Barbès, "La récitation coranique à Damas et à Alger," *Annales de l'Institut d'Etudes Orientales*, 6 (1942-47), pp. 66-107, with numerous examples.

run counter to our Western conception of order<sup>i</sup> (town planning that isn't; Oriental criteria of *adab* that are purely decorative and take only contrasts into account; etc.). However, it should be emphasized that if there is no break with the East, the specific characteristics have been able to assert themselves: in particular, the two recognized masterpieces from Andalusian *adab*—the *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* by Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) and Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*—are works that one can qualify overall as being well-ordered. The continuity between the empirical rationalization of Ziriyāb and the cultural milieu in which Ibn Ṭufayl lived is clear:



Our only aim here has been to put forward hypotheses to illuminate a remarkable stage in philosophical reflection.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *ḤAYY IBN YAQẒĀN* AS MALE UTOPIA

Fedwa Malti-Douglas

(Indiana University)

The philosophical tale *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* ("Alive, Son of Awake") by the Andalusian philosopher-physician Ibn Ṭufayl is without doubt a classic of medieval Arabic philosophical literature. Though its title is taken from that of an earlier work by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), the text of Ibn Ṭufayl represents a clearly distinct, essentially original narrative.<sup>1</sup> Scholars have long recognized and debated the philosophical aspect of Ibn Ṭufayl's tale and its place in the history of medieval Islamic philosophic and religious thought.<sup>2</sup> But the Ṭufaylian *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* is also alive and well in the modern Arabic consciousness. Not only has it been reprinted on numerous occasions, but its hero and his adventures have become the subject of paintings, films, and television specials.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See the three *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* texts by Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl, and al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) edited by Aḥmad Amīn in his *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān li-Ibn Sīnā wa-Ibn Ṭufayl wa-l-Suhrawardī* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1959). For an important examination of Ibn Ṭufayl in the context of the literary character of Arabic philosophic writing, see Muhsin Mahdi, "Philosophical Literature," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period*, edited by M.J.L. Young, J.D. Latham, and R.B. Sergeant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 76–105. I would like to thank Professor Mahdi for making this text available to me in advance of publication.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, George F. Hourani's reevaluations of Léon Gauthier's thesis in "The Principal Subject of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 15 (1956), pp. 40–46. Gauthier's ideas can be found in his *Ibn Thofail: sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1909). I would like to thank Laurence Michalak, who provided me with a copy of this book on very short notice. For an examination of these and similar positions on Ibn Ṭufayl's text, see Lawrence I. Conrad's contribution to this volume, pp. 240–53 below.

<sup>3</sup>See Fārūq Sa'd's "Muqaddima" to his edition of Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (Tripoli, Libya: Al-Dār al-'arabiya li-l-kitāb, 1983), pp. 7, 13. See also Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Femmes et histoire," in *La dimension culturelle du développement* (Tunis: Centre d'études et de recherches économiques et sociales, 1991), pp. 253–60.



Understanding the significations of such a popular work is clearly vital. It is particularly important to explore not just the more obvious surface, manifest messages (what we usually think of as the intent), but also the less avowed meanings carried by the text. Ibn Ṭufayl unquestionably intended a religio-philosophical message to his work. But the casting of his treatise into narrative form, and even more into the form of a story about the adventures and relationships of an individual, created other levels of meaning. Willy nilly, once one is talking about individuals and their relationships, one is obliged to take positions on basic issues of human society. By adopting the literary form of a myth, the Andalusian philosopher-physician automatically generated a mythico-psychological discourse.

Allegory, of course, does not empty mythic discourse, it enriches it. The philosophical significations of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* do not bury the mythic ones. Like any text worthy of its name, Ibn Ṭufayl's classic is a nexus of complementary mutually defining meanings. Indeed, from the point of view of literary structure, it is the mythic aspect which supports the philosophical. In *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, the two come together in the conception of a male utopia.

On one level, the Ṭufaylian narrative is an adventure story: an abandoned infant, Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, grows up on an uninhabited island where he is nurtured by a gazelle. He learns physical survival and discovers the laws of the universe, eventually achieving a mystical state. His meeting with Absāl, someone from another island—civilized this time—leads to his contact with society. This contact is not fruitful, and both men return to the original island to live happily ever after.

It is undoubtedly this adventurous aspect and the meeting with the other (as well as, obviously, the availability of Edward Pococke's Latin and Simon Ockley's English translations of Ibn Ṭufayl's classic) that have led many critics to make a connection between the twelfth-century Arabic text and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>4</sup> A few basic differences (some also noted by the Arab critic Madanī Ṣāliḥ) should, however, lay to rest any

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<sup>4</sup>On the comparison, see, for example, A.-M. Goichon, "Ḥayy b. Yaqzān," *EI*<sup>2</sup>, III, 333; Aly Mazaheri, *La vie quotidienne des musulmans au Moyen Âge, X<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1951), pp. 142–43; Riad Kocache's Introduction to his translation of the text, *The Journey of the Soul: the Story of Hai bin Yaqzan as Told by Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Tufail* (London: Octagon Press, 1982), viii–x. The latter does recognize some differences between the two texts, but still opts for the borrowing. Fārūq Sa'd (pp. 41–44) cites still more authorities to buttress this linkage and his own belief in it. By far the most sensible critic who deals with this question is Madanī Ṣāliḥ in *Ibn Ṭufayl: qadāyā wa-mawāqif* (Baghdad: Dār al-Rashīd li-l-nashr, 1980), pp. 167–78. It is worth noting in this connection that other literary progenitors—popular accounts of the survival of shipwrecked sailors—were also available to Defoe at the time. See the appendix to Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, edited with an introduction by Angus Ross (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), pp. 301–10.

exaggerated comparisons: 1) Crusoe's arrival on his island takes place when he is already an adult, as opposed to Ḥayy, who arrives there as an infant; 2) Crusoe arrives with all the accouterments and knowledge of civilization, whereas Ḥayy acquires all this on his own; 3) Crusoe's relationship with Friday is an altogether different one from that between Ḥayy and Absāl. The Western text sets up a clear "imperialist" relationship between the shipwrecked adventurer and his "man Friday." The very different Ḥayy and Absāl relationship, as we shall see, is crucial to an understanding of Ibn Ṭufayl's narrative. In fact, if one insisted on a comparison between the English classic and some Arabic text, it might be more interesting to see Robinson Crusoe in the context of the Sindbad cycle in *The Arabian Nights*.<sup>5</sup>

To characterize *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡẓān* as a male utopia is to call attention to the problem of gender, to the play of male and female, in Ibn Ṭufayl's text. The burgeoning field of gender-conscious criticism has already shown the ubiquity of such fundamental mental structures. More important, scholars have extended the examination beyond the traditional area of the image of women to the reexamination of the Western cultural corpus as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

What do we mean, however, by a utopia; and are we justified in interpreting *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡẓān* as one? A utopia (based on a pun from two Greek words meaning "no place" and "good place") is a text which sets up an ideal society, normally a total one. M.H. Abrams notes that "most utopias... represent their ideal place under the fiction of a distant country reached by some venturesome adventurer."<sup>7</sup> In the words of Kathryn Hume:

We see people who exemplify the virtues of the system. We see children being educated to fit and fulfill the ideals of the society. We usually follow the adventures of an outsider, surrogate for ourselves, who ultimately wishes to convert to this new way of life.

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<sup>5</sup>Not only do the stories of both Sindbad and Crusoe involve multiple voyages and shipwrecks, but each hero is driven back to the sea by the spirit of adventure and each recovers very largely due to his tenacity and self-reliance.

<sup>6</sup>See, for example, Luce Irigaray's reading of Plato in *Spéculum de l'autre femme* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1974), pp. 299–457. One of the best collection of essays reexamining the Western cultural corpus is *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Cf. Toril Moi, *Sexual Textual Politics* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 42–49.

<sup>7</sup>M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3rd edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), p. 177.

The critic continues by noting the two key themes in utopian fiction: reason and conditioning. Hume recognizes that utopias possess a "static plot structure," and then proceeds to discuss those which diverge from this.<sup>8</sup>

At first view, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* seems to fulfill some but by no means all of these textual demands. There are voyages, though strictly speaking no adventurers. We watch as first one character and then a second embrace the mystical way of life. There are no children; and if there is an outsider it would have to be Absāl, who only appears toward the end of the text. These differences, as we shall see, are important ones, but they contribute in their own way to giving *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* many of the aspects of what, after Hume, we can call a utopia of reason.<sup>9</sup>

Ḥayy's story begins with his birth. The reader encounters two variants for this all-important event. Variants, of course, form part and parcel of classical Arabic narrative literature. This is the case in the secular scholarly corpus, be it in the *adab* works, the biographical dictionaries, or the historical accounts, as well as in religious works, like the *ḥadīth* texts where variants are the rule rather than the exception.

But in the Ṭufaylian work, variants are not the norm. In fact, the two accounts of Ḥayy's birth form the only two variants in the text. This should alert us immediately that something unusual is taking place. Michael Riffaterre has called attention to what he calls the "ungrammaticality" of a text, signalled by elements that seem "less acceptable than their context," relating the entire notion to the presence of the intertext.<sup>10</sup> We can extend Riffaterre's notion to include any actions in a story, or significant elements in its narration, which break clearly with the generically recognizable basic principles of the text's composition.

In its composition and narration, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* follows the mode of classical Arabic fictional texts. Its facts, unlike those, for example, in an *adab* anecdotal collection, are not presented as historically true. Further, most classical Arabic fictional texts—and this is probably what most distinguishes them from non-fictional narratives, no matter how entertaining—avoid variants, presenting a direct uninterrupted narrative.

It is partly also this aspect of Ibn Ṭufayl's text which provoked the judgment of Gauthier:

Je ne crois pas qu'on puisse trouver dans toute la littérature arabe une oeuvre plus admirablement composée que le *Ḥayy*

<sup>8</sup>Kathryn Hume, *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1984), pp. 106–11, which includes a discussion of dystopias, and for the quotes, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>10</sup>Michael Riffaterre, "Intertextual Scrambling," *Romanic Review*, 68 (1977), p. 197.

*ben Yaqdhān*: Aucun détail superflu; pas de fautes de plan, pas de digressions. Tout s'y enchaîne avec une logique impeccable, suivant un progrès continu.<sup>11</sup>

If there is a digression, a discontinuity, it is the intrusion of the variant, itself introduced in the normal non-fictional style: some believe this, some believe that. It is not at all coincidental that this narrative ungrammaticality highlights an episode crucial to a gender-conscious understanding of the text.

We shall first present the two accounts in summary form and then analyze them.

The island of al-Wāqwāq on which Ḥayy flourished, the narrator tells us, is one on which people are born "without mother or father." Some claimed that Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān was one of these individuals, but there were others who denied this. The narrator then presents the first version of Ḥayy's birth.

The island facing this island was ruled by a jealous man who had a beautiful sister. Though he prevented her from marrying, she did so secretly to a relative of his named Yaqzān. She then became pregnant and had a male child. Fearing that her secret would be discovered, she placed the infant in an ark (*tābūt*) and went out at night with a group of her trusted servants to the seashore. Though "her heart burned with ardent love and out of fear for him," she recited a prayer and cast him on the water (*fī l-yamm*). The child was carried by the water to the other island and washed up on an especially verdant and well-protected part of the island. The ark stayed in that location and the sands provided a barrier so that the water would not enter the area. Hence, the tides never reached that particular spot. The nails and boards of the ark had loosened when it had been tossed by the water.

When the child became hungry, he began to cry. A gazelle (*ḡabya*) that had lost her fawn heard him. She followed the sound, thinking it was her own young one, until she reached the ark. She managed to open the ark by removing a board from the top and proceeded to care for the child.

This, then, according to the narrator, is the beginning of Ḥayy's state as far as those who deny spontaneous generation are concerned.

The first account is followed by that of "those who claim that he was generated from the earth/ground." On a part of the island mud had fermented, eventually mixing with "the hot and the cold, the humid and the dry," in such a way that equilibrium was achieved. This piece of fermented mud was very large and some parts of it were better suited for the formation of tissue. Its middle was the most temperate and the closest to the

<sup>11</sup>Gauthier, *Ibn Ṭhofaīl*, p. 65.

temperament of man. The narrator provides a detailed description of the natural conditions and changes that eventually permitted a human embryo to take shape in such a setting. When the infant became hungry, a gazelle that had lost her fawn reenters the narrative to take care of the child. And this is the point at which the two accounts merge.<sup>12</sup>

The first extended account of the genesis of the hero is essentially a natural one, since it involves a father and a mother, as distinguished from the second, representing some sort of spontaneous generation.

The first, or natural version, has important resonances in the Islamic tradition. The first is, of course, the similarity of certain elements with the Moses story as related in the Qur'ān.<sup>13</sup> The baby Moses is cast afloat in an ark/coffin (*tābūt*) by his mother, who casts it on the water (*fī l-yamm*).<sup>14</sup> Aside from the similarities in the events, the same phrases are employed in the Ṭufaylian narrative, creating a clear parallel between its birth account and that in the most sacred of Islamic texts. The word *tābūt*, meaning at once an ark and a coffin, is significant because it signals the rebirth that occurs in both narratives, though in a more forceful way in that of Ibn Ṭufayl, where even the name of the young child, Ḥayy ("Alive"), stresses this idea.

In his *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature*, Northrop Frye notes that:

Like that of many gods and heroes, the birth of Jesus is a threatened birth: Herod orders a massacre of infants in Bethlehem from which Jesus alone escapes. Moses similarly escapes from an attempt to destroy Hebrew children. . . .<sup>15</sup>

Ḥayy's birth is in these terms, of course, also a threatened birth. He escaped whatever fate was due him when he was cast on the water. But it is the implications of this that become significant for our perspective. By the circumstances of his birth, Ḥayy joins his two distinguished predecessors, Jesus and Moses, to become most certainly a mythic figure, if not a prophetic one.<sup>16</sup>

Though the similarities appear at first glance to dominate these threatened birth narratives, there are crucial differences. In the Jesus and Moses

<sup>12</sup>Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, edited by Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), pp. 20–33.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Antonio Pastor, *The Idea of Robinson Crusoe* (Watford: Gongora Press, 1930), p. 90.

<sup>14</sup>Sūrat Ṭāhā (20), vs. 39; Sūrat al-Qiṣaṣ (28), vs. 7.

<sup>15</sup>Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: the Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), p. 172.

<sup>16</sup>Ḥayy's possible prophetic role will be discussed below, p. 65.

stories, the infant children are saved from some threatening outside political force. Their mothers are completely innocent and play totally positive roles.<sup>17</sup> In the Ṭufaylian narrative, this is not the case. Ḥayy's mother, after her clandestine marriage to her brother's relative, her pregnancy, and giving birth, sets the young protagonist afloat out of fear that "she be exposed and her secret be revealed."<sup>18</sup> As a character, she is far from completely positive. First, she marries against her brother's will. But even more serious, and unlike the other two mothers, her motivations for casting her child on the water are not instigated by political circumstances beyond her control. Instead, it is her own fear that provokes her action. And that fear is related to her own transgression. The verb used in the text to express exposure or discovery, *yaftadiḥ*, carries implications of dishonor and shame. In his *Tāj al-'arūs*, al-Zabīdī (wr. 1188/1774) illustrates this aspect of *yaftadiḥ* with a *ḥadīth* about Bilāl's tardiness in calling the prayer, explaining that he missed the appropriate time and linking the discovery (*yaftadiḥ*) of the act to shame (*'ayb*).<sup>19</sup> In all fairness it should be noted that the narrator explains that just before Ḥayy's mother cast him onto the water, she feared for him. But this fear for the child comes in almost as an afterthought, the earlier fear for herself superseding it.

Also unlike Moses' mother, that of Ḥayy does not wean him after his safe arrival on the new island.<sup>20</sup> Rather, that role is fulfilled by a gazelle, who hears the cries of the infant child and believes that he is her own lost child. The gazelle becomes the mother substitute, obviating the need for the biological mother.

The second birth account involves no biological mother or father, dealing as it does with spontaneous generation. But, here again, the gazelle makes an appearance, linking the two variants.

The gazelle was textually a good choice for that function, the animal having a distinctively positive image in the Arabic literary tradition. Not only is it one of the animals who will enter Paradise, but it was considered a friendly creature that mixed easily with people.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, it was the best animal for suckling and it had the reputation for efficient weaning.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Sūrat Ṭāhā (20), vss. 36–40; Sūrat al-Qiṣaṣ (28), vss. 7–13. The pious and important character of Mary can be seen by the fact that among other references, she has a Sūra—Sūrat Maryam—named after her in the Qur'ān.

<sup>18</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, VII, edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Kuwayt: Maṭba'at Ḥukūmat al-Kuwayt, 1970), pp. 21–22.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Sūrat al-Qiṣaṣ (28), vss. 12–13.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Jāhiz (d. 255/868), *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 2nd edition (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1385–89/1965–69), III, 395; IV, 421, 423.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 155; III, 161.

But it is not only in the Arabic tradition that we encounter an abandoned child being cared for by a graceful animal. In folklore, a doe's caring for an abandoned child is a common element.<sup>23</sup> And the Ḥayy story does, indeed, contain folkloric elements: the abandonment on an island, the child floated in a casket, etc.<sup>24</sup> This should not be overly surprising, since as Edmund Leach, among others, has noted, "many Bible stories have their close parallels in folklore."<sup>25</sup>

The accounts of Ḥayy's birth, taken separately or together, reflect manifest ambivalence and barely concealed anxiety/hostility to the idea of motherhood. We have already noted that in the natural version the abandonment resulted from the effective transgression of a less-than-perfect mother. Indeed, a careful examination of the story shows that Ḥayy's birth and separation from society result from the tensions of concealed sexuality and brother-sister sexual jealousy. It is the sexual possessiveness of the brother, his incestuous desire, which blocks his sister's normal sexual expression through a socially recognized marriage. The noted expert on Arabic folklore, Hasan el-Shamy, has argued that brother-sister sexual attraction and consequent jealousy are so powerful in Arab culture that they replace in their psychological centrality the Oedipus conflict of Western society.<sup>26</sup> Whether or not one wishes to accept such a daring hypothesis, this attraction/jealousy is certainly ubiquitous in the Arabic tradition. In *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, it clearly defines sexuality and its resultant motherhood as a problem.

The casting of Ḥayy onto the water, while clearly a type of rebirth, also stresses his growth outside the normal familial and social structure, the *enfant sauvage* aspect of his story.<sup>27</sup> After all, he is left with no mother (and, of course, no father).<sup>28</sup> The island on which he "lands" is uninhabited, etc.

<sup>23</sup>See Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), VI, 5, 218. See also Pastor, *The Idea of Robinson Crusoe*, pp. 146–48, where he discusses the exposure of a child and its being suckled by an animal in the context of the Western classical and a variety of religious traditions.

<sup>24</sup>See, for example, Thompson, *Motif-Index*, VI, 5, 134, 427.

<sup>25</sup>Edmund Leach and Alan Aycok, *Structural Interpretations of Biblical Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 35.

<sup>26</sup>See, for example, Hasan el-Shamy, *Brother and Sister Type 872\*: a Cognitive Behavioristic Analysis of a Middle Eastern Oikotype* (Bloomington: Folklore Publications Group, 1979; Folklore Monographs Series, VIII), and for the jealous brother, p. 36; *idem*, "The Brother-Sister Syndrome in Arab Family Life, Socio-Cultural Factors in Arab Psychiatry: a Critical Review," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family*, 11 (1981), pp. 313–23, especially p. 320.

<sup>27</sup>See Roger Shattuck, *The Forbidden Experiment: the Story of the Wild Boy of Aveyron* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1980).

<sup>28</sup>Ḥayy is, of course, completely fatherless. But unlike the mother, the father never appears except as an element of Ḥayy's name. His absence is, therefore, non-problematic. His behavior is not called into question, no replacements are created for him, etc. Hence,

The birth account involving spontaneous generation is an even more radical rendering. Hayy develops not just outside society, as he does in the threatened birth account, but outside the biological chain of humanity, since no human agents are responsible for his conception. He is, indeed, "of no woman born."

More interesting for gender criticism, however, is what the two birth accounts imply for the problem of biological maternity and the role of the mother. The threatened birth posits sex as a problem, and a threat in which the biological mother is a dangerous and negative force. The spontaneous generation account handles the problem in a much neater way: the mother figure is eliminated altogether. The net result of both accounts, however, is to dispense with the female of the species, never to have her make an appearance in the text again.<sup>29</sup>

Why should the Hayy story, however, present the reader with two variants of the hero's birth? First and foremost, the presence of two accounts introduces the principle of duality in its unresolved nature. The narrator seems reluctant to express openly a preference for one or another of the two accounts. After explaining the conditions on the island where man can be born without father or mother, the text alerts the reader to the fact that he has only been told this because it is one of the things that "testifies to the correctness of what was mentioned concerning the possibility of man's being born in that spot without mother or father." The narrator continues by stating that some argue that Hayy was one of these individuals and others deny it.<sup>30</sup> It is at this point that the two birth accounts are presented. Some might want to see in this discussion a preference on the part of the narrator for spontaneous generation and an implicit rejection of one of the variants in favor of the other. After all, from a strictly logical point of view, the narrator has found in favor of the possibility of spontaneous generation and then labelled one variant as being that of those who believe in spontaneous generation. But in a mythic account like *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, much more than strict logic is involved. Given the work's fictional structure, the writer could easily have suppressed the biological variant if he chose. Or he could have clearly expressed his preference for the non-biological birth of the hero. Even the ordering of the arguments carefully maintains the full presence of the two variants, since the discussion of the possibility of

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the elimination of fatherhood is not a problem in the text, as the elimination of motherhood is.

<sup>29</sup>In all fairness, it should be noted that there are a few negative male figures as well in the text of *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, such as the brother who does not permit his sister to marry. But the negative males pale in the presence of the positive ones, whereas there are no positive human female characters. There was, after all, nothing to keep the narrator from including pious female figures, who certainly exist in the Arabic tradition.

<sup>30</sup>*Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 24.



spontaneous generation is followed not by this variant but by the biological one. In effect, by maintaining both variants and refusing to draw the literary narrative conclusions of a carefully laid philosophical implication, the work shows its fundamental ambivalence and refusal to choose between the two birth accounts. Duality, we shall have occasion to show consistently throughout our analysis, is a central and organizing force in the narrative of Ibn Ṭufayl.

And this original duality is one that the text never allows us to forget. When introducing the island from which Absāl comes, the text begins by mentioning that the island is "close to the island on which Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān was born, according to one of the two different accounts" of his beginning.<sup>31</sup> Given that the reader is well acquainted with the two accounts, since the narrator presented them in such detail, the repetition of their existence seems superfluous, serving only as a reminder that this is indeed a significant issue for the narrative.

Another echo occurs in the encounter between Ḥayy and Absāl. When Absāl asks Ḥayy how he came to the island, the latter informs him that he was not aware of "a beginning, nor a father or mother, other than the gazelle who brought him up."<sup>32</sup> This, of course, is an absolutely true statement of Ḥayy's knowledge of his own origin, and by no means implies a preference on the part of the narrator for spontaneous generation. Seen from Ḥayy's perspective, even the threatened birth would leave him with no awareness of "father or mother," since his own consciousness begins on the island after the abandonment.

The unresolved duality casts a shadow on the entire Ṭufaylian account. Its narrative ambivalence reflects psychological ambivalence. The mother is guilty or she is non-existent. Sex is problematic or perhaps not necessary at all. After all, we must remember, nothing obligated the author to maintain both versions integrally in his account and to fail to choose clearly between them. As we shall have occasion to show, this unresolved duality forms a striking contrast with the tendency toward the resolution or concordance of opposing forces so characteristic of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.

The absent biological mother is replaced by the gazelle. The animal fulfills a maternal function, feeding and protecting the child. Later, the child and the gazelle take care of each other. When the gazelle dies, the young boy is greatly saddened by this. Nevertheless, the precocious Ḥayy proceeds to dissect her to discover the cause of her demise, and we understand this act as a furthering of his own scientific knowledge. But the decline, death, and dissection of the gazelle represent an important break in the narrator's

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

description of the relationship between human child and animal nurturer. Hitherto, the gazelle was merely that, a gazelle. After these events, the animal becomes textually Ḥayy's "mother" (*umm*). Before her death, she was never so labelled. After her death, she is repeatedly referred to as "my mother," "his mother."<sup>33</sup>

An important key in deciphering this episode is clearly the change of status of the gazelle. The text links the dissection to the establishment of motherhood, since this is the first time the expression "mother" is used.<sup>34</sup> But there is more to this than meets the eye. The dissection on the part of the young boy expresses a mastery over the object being dissected, a female animal. In this sense, it is the opposite of motherhood, which normally implies dependence on the part of the child. It is as if the narrator could not acknowledge the gazelle as mother until she was clearly eliminated. And this elimination involves not only her death but her physical destruction by her metaphorical son.

That this physical parting with the gazelle is an extremely significant episode can be further documented by an examination of narrative voices in the text. The text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is comprised of a prologue and an epilogue, with the story of Ḥayy embedded between the two. Hence, Ḥayy does not relate his own adventures, unlike protagonists of other utopias who normally recount their escapades in the first person.<sup>35</sup> The issue of Ḥayy's ability to speak is, indeed, a central one in the hero's encounter with Absāl. The narrator explains in detail the inability of Ḥayy to understand Absāl, something heightened by Absāl's being somewhat of a linguist. In fact, Absāl proves an excellent language teacher to the precocious Ḥayy.<sup>36</sup>

How significant it then becomes to have Ḥayy himself speak in the first person—and this for the first time—when he is in the process of dissecting his mother. Twice he comments in the first person on the heart as "what I am searching for."<sup>37</sup> Given that Ḥayy does not have the faculty of speech until later, his ability to express himself directly (rather than through the indirect speech of a third-person narrator) becomes that much more crucial. The faculty of speech, even that of an unarticulated internal monologue, represents an advanced stage in the development of individual consciousness. This deepening of individual consciousness seems to be purchased at the price of the death of the gazelle/mother. Clearly, the death and dissec-

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 45–46, with numerous references to this phenomenon.

<sup>34</sup> A causal connection is not given, however, since the text indicates (*ibid.*, p. 45) that Ḥayy became aware that his mother was this physical body, not the other way around.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, edited and translated by H.V.S. Ogden (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949).

<sup>36</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 142–43.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

tion are not mere learning experiences in the young man's path to eventual maturity.

After the dissection, the corpse began to emit quite a stench, and Ḥayy was repulsed by it "and wished not to see it." Then he happened to observe two ravens fighting until one killed the other, at which point the winner proceeded to bury the dead loser. Ḥayy admired this action on the part of the raven, though he did say to himself that the raven was wrong to have killed its opponent. The burial was something that he should do for his "mother." Ḥayy then proceeded to do as the winner did and buried his mother's corpse.<sup>38</sup>

One could argue that the fight between the ravens was placed in the text to introduce the subject of burial. This is certainly true on one level. But the burial could have been dealt with differently. For example, an animal could have died accidentally (by falling from a tree) and been buried by a solicitous mate or parent. In our text, the killing of one raven by another is effectively juxtaposed to the dissection of the gazelle by Ḥayy, since Ḥayy's mother must be buried like the dead raven.

It is certainly also no accident that the narrator refers to the victorious raven as *al-ḥayy*. It could be argued that he was utilizing this in opposition to *mayyit* ("dead") in the preceding sentence; and since the episode is to illustrate a point about death and burial, what else is the reader to expect? But in the context of the Ṭufaylian narrative, in which Ḥayy is in the title of the work as well as being the name of the central character, such an appellation is heavily loaded. Had the narrator wished to eliminate the presence of any ambiguity in the juxtaposition of Ḥayy and *al-ḥayy*, he could have resorted to speaking of the two ravens as the winner and the loser, or the killer (*al-qātil*) and the killed (*al-maqtūl*), to take but two examples. More importantly, the formula *al-ḥayy*, without linkage to a noun—as in *al-ghurāb al-ḥayy*—becomes a quasi-title, bringing *al-ḥayy* even closer to Ḥayy himself. Reading the text intertextually strengthens this image. This incident is clearly based on the Qur'ānic version of the Cain and Abel story. There, the victorious brother learns burial from the sight of a single raven.<sup>39</sup> The Andalusian text places Ḥayy in parallel with the Qur'ānic murderer. The episode with the ravens, like the gazelle's change of title, expresses a problematical relationship between mother and son. Of course, the two ravens are also a manifestation of the principle of duality. But theirs is an aggressive duality, in which one party triumphs over the other.

Duality is introduced again with the appearance of Absāl. Absāl was one of two young men, Salāmān being the other, who had grown up on an

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> Sūrat al-Mā'ida (5), vs. 31.

island close to that of Ḥayy. The two young men were in basic disagreement, Salāmān being attached to *ẓāhirī* (exoteric) interpretation and Absāl to *bāṭinī* (esoteric). Salāmān liked society, whereas Absāl preferred solitude. Their essential differences led to their separation and to Absāl's departure for Ḥayy's island. The duality is one of unresolvable opposition.

But Absāl plays a much more important role in another duality, indeed the ultimate one in the narrative—that created by his relationship with Ḥayy. When the two accidentally encounter one other on the island, each looks at the other. Absāl was certain that Ḥayy had arrived (*waṣala*) on the island to seek isolation from people, “as he himself had arrived (*waṣala*) on it.”<sup>40</sup> Absāl thus identifies his own desires with those of Ḥayy, setting up a type of identity with the other personage.

Ḥayy, on the other hand, does not initially recognize what Absāl represents, having never encountered the likes of him. Ḥayy even interpreted Absāl's clothing as part of his skin. It is only after observing Absāl that Ḥayy, according to the narrator, “saw him in his image.” He then comprehends Absāl's clothing as “like his own clothing.”<sup>41</sup> In effect, identity is balanced with complementarity. Ḥayy initially thinks Absāl is different and quickly discovers he is the same. Absāl initially thinks that Ḥayy is the same and then discovers his difference.

This identification process presages their later involvement. Each is the alter ego of the other. After an abortive attempt to change the ways of the inhabitants on Salāmān's island, Ḥayy and Absāl return to their own island to continue their isolated way of life.

There is another crucial parallel in the Ṭufaylian narrative which brings Ḥayy and Absāl together: the idea of the voyage. As we noted earlier, the voyage is an important structural component of a utopia, normally permitting a clear break with what comes before. It may serve to isolate the ideal society from the one implicitly under attack. For similar reasons, the voyage also often proves an important part of dystopias as well.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the voyage as a narrative element is extremely significant in Ibn Ṭufayl.

The two characters undertake parallel voyages. Both Ḥayy and Absāl have voyages of departure as they do of return. It will be remembered, of course, that in one version Ḥayy's arrival on the island was brought about by his being cast on the water by his mother. And this represents his first voyage of sorts, permitting him to arrive on the uninhabited island with a clear break from his past and the society which gave him birth. Absāl arrives on the island on a ship, whose sailors drop him off on the shore.

<sup>40</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 139.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139–41.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, the medical dystopia by Léon Daudet, *Les morticoles* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1956).

Hence, each arrives on this island, which, but for the two of them, remains unsullied by other humans. The narrator makes a point of informing the reader that the sailors on Absāl's ship left him on shore, implying that they themselves did not set foot on the land.<sup>43</sup>

The second voyage is effected by Absāl and Ḥayy together to the island of Absāl's birth. When the two decide to go to this island, they hang about the shore hoping for some way to cross the water. It is only when a ship lost its way and was driven by chance to the shore of their island that Ḥayy and Absāl were able to get passage to the latter's original home.<sup>44</sup> After their abortive attempt to lead Salāmān and his people, the two return to Ḥayy's island. The narrator in this instance does not elaborate on how this took place, stating simply that God enabled them to make the crossing.<sup>45</sup> Ḥayy's island is not a place that one enters or leaves by normal means, but is cut off from the world, like other utopias.

On none of the voyages or contacts with ships or sailors do other individuals set foot within the utopic territory. It remains a sacred space, reserved for Ḥayy and Absāl. And the sea voyages represent clear breaks from one way of life into another, the water acting as both physical and spiritual boundary.

The absence of any specific description in the last return to the island highlights, in its own way, the isolative and asocial nature of Ḥayy's and Absāl's way of life. It is as if their seclusion from society and individual humans began with the decision to return to Ḥayy's island. And this return is not only a reentry into the utopic territory but also a commentary on prophecy. When Absāl first arrives on Ḥayy's island and describes the religion of his own island, he is called "a prophet."<sup>46</sup> But it is in fact Ḥayy whose path is closer to that of the prophets, whose unsuccessful missions the Qur'ān repeatedly recounts. Traditionally, these prophets attempt to transmit their message of salvation, but they are ignored and their words go unheeded. This is closer to Ḥayy's misadventures on Salāmān's island. He is the one who wishes to guide its inhabitants on the right path, but is, of course, unsuccessful. And thus it is that he and Absāl return to their isolated environment.

It has by now become clear that on a structural level Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* portrays the resolution, but not the elimination or fusion, of potentially conflictual dualities. The text moves from opposite and irreconcilable duality to complementary and harmonious duality. Clearly, Ibn Ṭufayl's principal philosophical burden is the reconciliation of apparently

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<sup>43</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 138.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

contrary positions: natural reason vs. revelation, philosophical knowledge vs. mysticism. This process is personified, though not directly paralleled, in the relationship of Ḥayy and Absāl, who combine identity and complementarity. Their personal, essentially utopic harmony reflects ultimate intellectual compatibility, the resolution of duality on both the religio-philosophical and the personal levels.

But this harmony was not arrived at either easily or—and what is more important—without cost. Ḥayy's life, and hence the story as a whole, began doubly under the sign of unresolved duality. On a narrative level, it is marked by the uncertainty of incompatible variants. Socially, one of the two birth accounts is triggered by the unhappy pair of brother and sister, who cannot resolve their identity and opposition of being at once siblings but also of the opposite sex. Ḥayy's infant existence is threatened by the problematic couple. As we have shown, neither of the two mother-child relationships is free of problems: and the end of the second leads directly into the episode of the two ravens, an aggressive opposition that produced the death of one of the parties. Ḥayy's idealized duality with Absāl is preceded textually by the unresolved duality of Absāl and Salāmān, which provides an excellent contrast to the bliss that will follow.

The story begins, in other words, with a problematic male-female sibling relationship and ends with a uniquely male pair, free of problems. Along the way, the narrator presents other possible dualities, but none except the male pair provides the ideal solution.

The text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is framed within a prologue and an epilogue in which the narrator addresses a metaphorical "brother."<sup>47</sup> Need it be noted that the relationship between narrator and reader is a non-conflictual one (from a literary point of view, there is nothing inevitable about this), and that it embraces the entire text? This is certainly not unheard of in Islamic literature. Al-Ghazālī's spiritual autobiography, *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, for example, begins with the narrator addressing his "brother in religion."<sup>48</sup> But there is certainly nothing obligatory about such a procedure either. It was not followed, for example, in the *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* of Ibn Sīnā or in that of al-Suhrawardī.<sup>49</sup>

In Ibn Ṭufayl, this two-brother relationship is no accident. One can argue that it represents—as in al-Ghazālī, we might add—an ideal Islamic social relationship, but here expressed in essentially religious terms. And

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 157.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, edited by 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-ḥadītha, 1388/1968), p. 62. As is clear from many of the studies in this volume, a close relationship on more than this level exists between the *Munqidh* of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Ṭufayl's allegory.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 43; al-Suhrawardī, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 135.

yet a similar phenomenon obtains in the famous *maqāmāt*. The two heroes of that prose genre, the narrator (who is also an actor) and the rogue hero, function effectively as a male couple. Not only is the narrator in constant pursuit of the rogue, in an eternal game of the discovery of his identity, but there are *maqāmas* in which the narrator acquires the traits of his rogue hero and joins him on his escapades.<sup>50</sup>

Clearly, the male couple is one of the ways in which the ideal society can be set up in an Islamic context. Islamic society favors homosocial (distinct from homosexual) relations.<sup>51</sup> And this is where Ibn Ṭufayl's male utopia comes in. Though limited, it is a society of men and hence, by implication, of fellowship. If absolute solitude had been deemed necessary to the contemplative life, the narrator could easily have left Ḥayy and Absāl separately content on different islands.

Such an ideal world being a world without women is certainly not unusual in literature, as Judith Fetterley has shown in her studies of American fiction,<sup>52</sup> but a utopia without women is more difficult to imagine. Women there are aplenty in Thomas More's text.<sup>53</sup> Even more interesting in this context is that a militant feminist utopia like *Les guerillères* of Monique Wittig includes men.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, many feminist utopias exclude men. But this is obviously less of a problem than its converse (parthenogenesis, as in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*,<sup>55</sup> is biologically less unreasonable and male insemination is far briefer than pregnancy).<sup>56</sup> Of course, the reasonably positive image of the gazelle, when contrasted with the negative image of the biological mother, might make us think that the issue here is not so much procreation as it is nurturing. But the two birth accounts clearly dispel this. Both biological processes, that of procreation and that

<sup>50</sup>The phenomenon is very clear in Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008), *Al-Maqāmāt*, edited with a commentary by Muḥammad 'Abduh (Beirut: Dār al-mashriq, 1889). The importance and development in the relationship between narrator and rogue have been correctly stressed in James Monroe, *The Art of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī as Picaresque Narrative* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983).

<sup>51</sup>See the excellent study by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

<sup>52</sup>Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: a Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 19.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, More, *Utopia*, pp. 33, 34, 40, 46, 59, 75, 78. On the role of women in men's utopias, see Elaine Hoffman Baruch, "Women in Men's Utopias," in *Women in Search of Utopia: Mavericks and Mythmakers*, edited by Ruby Rohrlich and Elaine Hoffman Baruch (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), pp. 209–18.

<sup>54</sup>See, for example, Monique Wittig, *Les guerillères* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1969), pp. 178, 197, 203, 204.

<sup>55</sup>Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), especially p. 45.

<sup>56</sup>For the problem of fatherhood vs. motherhood in feminist utopias, see Susan H. Lees, "Motherhood in Feminist Utopias," in *Women in Search of Utopia*, pp. 219–32.

of nurturing, normally associated with the female, are problematic in Ibn Ṭufayl's text, and both create dilemmas which must be resolved.<sup>57</sup>

It is perhaps the radical elimination of sexuality and of the female of the species that is so distinctive in Ibn Ṭufayl's vision. The absence of the female is essential to the utopic harmonious elements of Ḥayy's and Absāl's perfect society. Theirs is a world without sexuality, like a monastery in the desert. Sexuality is quite problematic. Ḥayy, as part of his learning experience, becomes aware of the sexual needs of the human animal, which are placed in the same category as the other physical needs, such as shelter, food, or drink.<sup>58</sup> But the ascetic life-style precludes sexuality, and Lutz Richter-Bernburg may be correct in his assumption that the ascetic "regimen is also meant to subdue his (Ḥayy's) sexuality."<sup>59</sup> Sexuality, motherhood, are presented in negative terms. The two birth accounts make this abundantly clear: the first, positively, through the problem couple, the second, through spontaneous generation, which is nothing more than the dream of life without sexuality and without motherhood. Imagery in this matter is consistent: when the narrator speaks of the conflict between this world and the next, he likens it to two wives. He who pleases one angers the other.<sup>60</sup> Such a metaphorical use of marriage is, of course, a far cry from certain Christian images like that of the Church as the bride of Christ. Nor does Ibn Ṭufayl base his mystical explanations on the familiar erotically inspired vocabulary of Lover and Beloved.

Ibn Ṭufayl's utopia is one of reason (as opposed to one of conditioning) in that its members accede to it through the development of their own reason, not through their conditioning or education. By the same token, his perfect world demands separation from society and the female. It is a one-time male utopia, an ideal world which cannot be recreated.

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<sup>57</sup>For an interesting comparison of the maternal as the nurturing vs. the procreative, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 110–69. The chapter is quite important and raises many questions worth investigating in an Islamic context.

<sup>58</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 98, 106.

<sup>59</sup>See below, p. 109.

<sup>60</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 131–32.



## CHAPTER THREE

### IBN ṬUFAYL: A MEDIEVAL SCHOLAR'S VIEWS ON NATURE

Remke Kruk

(Rijksuniversiteit Leiden)

“He had to take animals that were available in great abundance so as not to completely extirpate a species.”<sup>1</sup> To the average twentieth-century reader, this statement of Ibn Ṭufayl may appear perfectly straightforward. But even such a seemingly unambiguous statement in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* can only be interpreted correctly if we possess a thorough knowledge of Ibn Ṭufayl's views on nature and his position vis-à-vis his fellow natural philosophers; and from this it may be inferred that for a well-balanced assessment of Ibn Ṭufayl's ideas in this respect, more is needed than simply browsing through the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.

Ibn Ṭufayl's views about nature are indeed worth analyzing, first, because certain aspects of them (namely, the practical) can be considered representative for the relation the average person had (and has) with nature, and second, because his philosophical views neatly sum up the basic points of view taken by his predecessors, and further, set forth his own personal opinion about nature and the place of human beings within it. His ideas, in short, are of considerable interest for the history of philosophy and science, for they are by no means a simple compilation of commonly accepted notions on the “world of created things.” Ibn Ṭufayl had very outspoken philosophical views, which he pursued to their ultimate consequences in order to define his views on nature. In natural philosophy, as in many other respects, the influence of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) on his thought is obvious,<sup>2</sup> but Ibn Ṭufayl goes beyond mere copying of the latter's ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, edited by Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Lenn Evan Goodman's notes to his translation, *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān: a Philosophical Tale* (New York: Twayne, 1972), offer abundant proof of this. My quotations from *Ḥayy* are, with some modifications, taken from this translation.

We could perhaps define his approach more or less adequately by saying that he brought some of Ibn Sīnā's highly theoretical concepts of nature down to the level of everyday observation—in other words, he explained Ibn Sīnā's philosophy in terms of the description of simple natural phenomena.

Another possible influence on Ibn Ṭufayl's thought about nature may be sought in the writings of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', the "Brethren of Purity," a mystico-philosophical brotherhood that flourished in tenth-century Iraq. It is true that he never mentions them, but this may simply be due to their heretical reputation. The fact remains that, as we shall see, a number of parallels can be pointed out between *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* and the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, and there is at least some evidence that the latter work was known in Andalusia in Ibn Ṭufayl's day. A work such as the *Kitāb al-ḥadā'iq* by Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawṣī (d. 521/1127)<sup>3</sup> bears a Neoplatonic-Pythagorean stamp strongly reminiscent of the *Rasā'il*, and there is some additional circumstantial evidence which suggests that Andalusian scholars were familiar with their existence.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper I will survey Ibn Ṭufayl's references to subjects which can be said to belong to the field nowadays described as "natural history," a field which includes zoology, botany, mineralogy, and several of their now highly specialized subdivisions, such as the branch of science which seeks to discover the origin of life. I will try to point out how Ibn Ṭufayl's treatment of these subjects relates to that of medieval Islamic culture in general, and—in some cases—to medieval Islamic philosophy in particular.

### *The Practical Approach: Classification*

A natural philosopher/scientist (such as Ibn Ṭufayl) approaches nature with the aim to discover general patterns and mechanisms; he will then try to devise theories enabling him to explain, and to predict, a maximum number of phenomena. It is true, of course, that classical and medieval philosophers embarked on theorizing before they had collected an amount of data sufficient to satisfy the standards of today's scientists, and that once a theory had been formulated which fitted in with the basic principles of their philosophy, they were seldom prepared to collect additional data

<sup>3</sup>Miguel Asín Palacios, "Ibn al-Sīd de Badajoz y su 'Libro de los cercos' (*Kitāb al-ḥadā'iq*)," *Al-Andalus*, 5 (1940), pp. 45–152. A more recent Arabic edition and translation into Italian of this work is available in M. Jevolella, *Kitāb al-ḥadā'iq. Il libro dei cerchi* (Milan: Archè, 1984).

<sup>4</sup>Emilio García Gómez, "Alusiones a los 'Ijwān al-Safā'" en la poesía arábigo-andaluza," *Al-Andalus*, 4 (1936–39), pp. 462–65. The question of Ibn Ṭufayl's relation to other Neoplatonic philosophers is discussed in my article "Neoplatonists and After: From Ibn Ṭufayl to Ibn an-Nafīs," in *The Neoplatonic Tradition: Jewish, Christian and Islamic Themes*, edited by Arjo Vanderjagt and Detlef Pätzold (Cologne: Dinter Verlag, 1991), pp. 75–85.

in order to check and perhaps modify their theories; but this implies a difference in degree rather than in essence as compared to modern science.

The philosophers' theoretical approach to nature was not, however, the one that prevailed among the majority of people; then, as now, the latter tended to look at minerals, plants, and animals from a completely different point of view, namely that of the practical use to which they could be put. Can they provide us with raw material; can they be eaten; can they be of use in some other way?

Traces of this practical outlook can also be found in Ibn Ṭufayl's story, for his hero Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān also starts out as one such layman, and his approach to nature is at first wholly practical. The primitive classification with which he mentally tries to bring some order into the world surrounding him also reflects this practical attitude. In this respect, Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* can be considered representative of the general medieval view on nature, and the book truly reflects a number of the approaches to be observed in other medieval Islamic works in some way dealing with nature. We will illustrate this by some examples, beginning with the "lifeless" substances. These cannot very well be termed "inorganic," because according to the classical and medieval tradition this group included a number of organic substances, such as the "stones" found in different parts of animal bodies.

### *Minerals*

Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān at an early age becomes familiar with primary "lifeless" substances such as water,<sup>5</sup> earth (in its different shapes, such as stones<sup>6</sup> and clay<sup>7</sup>), air,<sup>8</sup> and fire.<sup>9</sup> Their basic qualities and the practical uses to which they can be put (providing drinking water; giving light, warmth, and a means to transform substances, especially foodstuffs) soon become clear to him.

It is only at a later stage of his development that the theoretical aspects of the inanimate part of creation are discussed. Ḥayy (or Ibn Ṭufayl, who sometimes forgets to use his "mouthpiece" Ḥayy) will then remark on the way in which matter can change its appearance as the result of outward influences,<sup>10</sup> and embark upon philosophical discussions about the four elements and the way in which changes in nature are effectuated. He will also refer to mineral substances such as gold and *yāqūt* (ruby or sapphire),

<sup>5</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> Water becomes fire, fire becomes smoke, smoke becomes soot (*ibid.*, pp. 55, 60).

which of all created things are the most pure and thus the least subject to decay. Here we have a reference to the complicated theories about the mineral world which governed the outlook of many medieval Islamic scientists in this field.<sup>11</sup> Compare, for instance, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', who, speaking about mineral substances, say: "The noblest of them are those of which the parts cannot be cleft asunder by fire, such as gold and *yāqūt*."<sup>12</sup>

About plants and animals Ibn Ṭufayl has more to say than about the mineral world. Plants and animals are treated by medieval Arabic sources from many different points of view, traces of which can also be pointed out in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. This is not necessarily because Ibn Ṭufayl was influenced in this respect by other scholars, but simply because in the person of the young Ḥayy he presented the archetypical human being, who depended on plants and animals for his daily sustenance, and whose views—and accordingly his (implicit) classifications—ran along practical lines.

### Plants

Plants, including seeds, provided Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān with food, fuel, building material, weapons, and clothing—the latter at first simply in the form of branches, torn from a tree and hung from his belt, and later in the more sophisticated form of woven fibers. The plant species explicitly mentioned by Ibn Ṭufayl in this context<sup>13</sup> are hemp (*qunnāb*) and the bark of two kinds of mallow, *khubbāza* and *khiṭmīya*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā' wa-khillān al-wafā'* (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-'arabiya, 1327/1928), II, 89–91; al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt*, edited by Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1849), pp. 204–206.

<sup>12</sup> *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, II, 93.

<sup>13</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, p. 53.

<sup>14</sup> The Middle Eastern editions give here *qaṣab al-khiṭmīya*; Gauthier has *qaḍb al-khiṭmīya*. The *khiṭmī* (also *khaṭmī*, *khaṭmīya*), known as ketmie, is *Althaea officinalis*. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what the correct reading should be. That the bark of the other plant mentioned, the *khubbāza*, another species of mallow, was used for making clothes is confirmed in a contemporary Spanish-Arab source, 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Kutāmī's comments to Dioscorides III.139; see *Dioscurides Triumphans. Ein anonym arabischer Kommentar (Ende 12. Jahrhundert n. Chr.) zur Materia medica*, edited and translated by Albert Dietrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1988), I, 117; II, 502. The same text (II, 503 no. 141) contains an intriguing remark (by Dietrich himself, without further references) about the *qannābis aghriyā*, which, according to Ibn Juljul (d. after 384/994), the first commentator, is the wild hemp, *qinnāb barrī*, while the other, 'Abd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ, says that he has never seen anything such as wild hemp. Dietrich adds that the suggestion has been made that the plant in question is *Althaea cannabina* L., which grows in Spain and has very long fibers, but is rarely cultivated. — A hemp-like mallow, thus. Is it too hazardous to speculate that this plant, possibly under a popular name such as *qinnāb al-khiṭmīya* or *qinnāb khiṭmī*, was what Ibn Ṭufayl had in mind?

The only trees mentioned by name are the palm<sup>15</sup> and the beech.<sup>16</sup> The division of the vegetable kingdom into plants and trees is the one most commonly found in medieval sources; other categories which frequently figure in these sources and also occur in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* are aromatic herbs,<sup>17</sup> green vegetables,<sup>18</sup> nuts,<sup>19</sup> and fruit-bearing trees.<sup>20</sup> These, along with many others, are the kind of categories we encounter in the medieval classifications.<sup>21</sup>

But practical knowledge also provides the data which will later form the basis for theoretical notions about plant physiology. Whoever needs plants for his own practical purposes will, just like Ḥayy, quickly discover that plants grow by assimilating nutrients with their roots,<sup>22</sup> that they need moisture and sunlight,<sup>23</sup> and that when they have grown to maturity they may produce seeds which under the right circumstances will grow into new plants.<sup>24</sup>

### *Animals*

As for the animals mentioned in the text, they too are implicitly classified by Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān in several different ways, which all find representation in medieval Islamic scholarship. We hear about the existence of sea as well as land animals;<sup>25</sup> about poultry<sup>26</sup> and wild birds;<sup>27</sup> intestinal worms which grow in animal bellies;<sup>28</sup> gazelles;<sup>29</sup> and wild horses and asses, which Ḥayy succeeds in taming.<sup>30</sup> Thus, all the main categories that we encounter in

<sup>15</sup>The *khūṣ*, of which Ḥayy pleats the leaves with *ḥalfā'* grass to make a belt (*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 36), generally stands for palm leaf.

<sup>16</sup>*Zān*: Ḥayy uses its branches as shafts for his spears (*ibid.*, p. 54).

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup>For examples, see Manfred Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 82–86.

<sup>22</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 110, 112, 114.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 51, 110. Ḥayy learns to eat cooked food by roasting a washed-up sea animal in the fire (*ibid.*, p. 49).

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>27</sup>Swallows, eagles, and the raven are mentioned (*ibid.*, pp. 37, 46, 53).

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 33–36.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 54. This episode has always greatly stirred popular imagination, as did the whole "Robinsonade" part of the story. This has sometimes led to curious alterations in the story, such as the variation in a Ḥayy-derived European novel that the tamed horses were fed with meat and blood (a reminiscence of Alexander's Bucephalos?). See my article "An Eighteenth-Century Descendant of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān and Robinson Cru-

medieval zoological texts are there: the classification into spontaneously generated, oviparous, or viviparous animals of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā';<sup>31</sup> the "ruling" (*mālik*), "ruled" (*mamlūk*), or "neither ruling nor ruled" (*lā mālik wa-lā mamlūk*) animals of Ibn Abī l-Ash'ath (d. 360/970);<sup>32</sup> the division (minus the *jinn*) of the animal world into man, *jinn*, mounts, domestic animals, wild animals, birds, and creeping things, as set forth by al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283).<sup>33</sup> Beasts of prey, also sometimes included as a separate category, do not occur (as opposed to birds of prey) on the island, as is explicitly stated.<sup>34</sup>

### *Animal Behavior: Ḥayy's Changing Attitude toward Nature*

Ibn Ṭufayl's descriptions of animal life are quite out of the ordinary and do, to be sure, form one of the attractive aspects of the story. They include remarks on animal behavior which distinctly go beyond the oft-repeated animal lore that we continuously encounter in medieval zoological literature. It is not that his observations are remarkable to the extent that they contain information that is in itself exceptional or difficult to obtain: the remarkable fact is that Ibn Ṭufayl bothered to write them down at all. Really detailed knowledge on animals is rarely to be sought in the writings of the natural philosophers, but—again—rather appears among those people who occupied themselves with animals for practical purposes. Farmers, hunters, horsemen, falconers, fishermen—these were the people who had to possess a thorough knowledge of the animals on which they depended for their livelihood. This knowledge found its way into writings intended for the specific use of these professions, and occasionally bits of it trickled through, in some form or other, into texts with a different scope, such as literary (*adab*), encyclopedic, and philosophical works. In this way, fact and fiction frequently became mixed, as we see, for instance, in Ibn Ṭufayl's description of the tender cares with which the doe surrounds the small baby Ḥayy: nursing him, weaning him, leading him to food and water, cracking fruits for him (a picturesque but inaccurate detail, so far as the behavior

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soe: Don Antonio de Trezzanio," *Arabica*, 34 (1987), p. 363; the matter is also briefly discussed in the Introduction to my Dutch translation of *Ḥayy: Wat geen oog heeft gezien, geen oor heeft gehoord en in geen mensenhart is opgekomen. De geschiedenis van Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1985), pp. 25–28.

<sup>31</sup> *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, II, 154.

<sup>32</sup> See Remke Kruk, "Hedgehogs and their 'Chicks': a Case History of the Aristotelian Reception in Arabic Zoology," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 2 (1985), p. 210. The "ruling" animal is, of course, man.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Qazwīnī, *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*, p. 301. For other examples, see Ullmann, *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, pp. 51–53.

<sup>34</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 33. Ibn Ṭufayl does, however, contradict himself on this point; see Lawrence Conrad's comment on this problem, p. 242 below.

of gazelles is concerned), shading him, and covering him up to keep him warm.<sup>35</sup>

Genuine observation, on the other hand, seems to underlie Ibn Ṭufayl's remarks on the "language" of animals.<sup>36</sup> The little Ḥayy learns to imitate perfectly the different calls of birds and other animals, "but most of all did he imitate the different calls which the gazelles used to warn, court, summon, or defend each other, for animals have different cries for all these occasions."<sup>37</sup> That animals have a certain kind of speech, restricted, however, to the conveyance of a few basic emotions, was already stated by Ibn Sīnā;<sup>38</sup> this is an illustration of Ibn Ṭufayl's use of Ibn Sīnā, to which I referred in the beginning of this paper.

A characteristic instance of literary folklore is the account of the raven which buries its dead companion,<sup>39</sup> but the statement that dead animals are shunned by others, with the exception of birds, is at least partly true.<sup>40</sup> All such material must have formed part of the corpus of popular animal lore that had such a widespread influence on classical and medieval (Middle Eastern as well as European) culture. Prominent in this field is of course the *Physiologus* in its many versions, but a vast array of other popular beliefs about animals and their habits also circulated and found its way into all kinds of literature, a process considerably stimulated by the anecdotal value of animal lore. We have only to look at al-Jāḥiẓ' voluminous *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, written in the ninth century, to see this confirmed.<sup>41</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl continues his description of the gazelles' life with an account of the quarrels for food which sometimes break out among them, and in which their horns prove useful weapons, this putting Ḥayy at such a dis-

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* As an additional occurrence of the widespread folk motive of a baby fostered by a wild animal, we may point out the popular romance of Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan, who also was suckled by a doe; see *Sīrat fāris al-Yaman wa-mubīd ahl al-kufr wa-l-miḥan al-amīr Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan* (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-khayrīya, AH 1310), I, 24. The "fostered by wild animals" motif is not included, on the other hand, in a Ḥayy-like episode in another popular romance (or folk epic), namely *Qisṣat Fayrūz Shāh ibn al-malik Dārāb* (Beirut: Maktabat al-tarbiya, 1984), where (I, 9) the queen sets her newborn son, issue of an incestuous union, out to sea in a casket (*ṣandūq*) "after having suckled him until he had had enough." The baby is here reared by a poor fisherman and his wife.

<sup>36</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 34, 38.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> *Avicenna's De Anima (Arabic Text), Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā'*, edited by Fazlur Rahman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 103–104.

<sup>39</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 46. The story is of Qur'ānic origin; see *Ṣūrat al-Mā'ida* (5), vv. 30–31.

<sup>40</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> *Al-Jāḥiẓ, Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, edited by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 2nd edition (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1385–89/1965–69). For some representative extracts in translation, see Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, translated by D.M. Hawke (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 130–85.

advantage that he begins to look for a substitute. He finds it in the shape of sticks, which he brandishes at the animals in their scramble for food. This is his first step away from the community of the animals in which he had formerly participated as an equal; he gradually will have to realize his superiority over other living beings, and this begins with the discovery that his hands give him the possibility to remediate whatever disadvantage he suffers in relation to the animals. With his hands he can make weapons which stand on a par with the horns, spurs, hoofs, beaks, and claws that animals have at their disposal. He can make coverings for his private parts, which in all other animals are covered by tails and hair,<sup>42</sup> and later on he even fashions proper clothes and shoes.<sup>43</sup> He can tame horses and asses to make up for his lack of speed, and he can even make saddles and bridles for them.<sup>44</sup> He can train birds of prey to hunt for him,<sup>45</sup> and keep poultry to use their eggs and chicks. With his hands he builds a house, which also serves as a storeroom—watching the swallows build their nests gave him the idea.<sup>46</sup> In the end, “no animal dared to stand up to him:”<sup>47</sup> he had become the veritable master of creation, unique even in the sense that within his little universe he was the only creature without a single fellow being.<sup>48</sup>

And this, of course, is the starting point for thoughts about nature which transcend the merely practical field.

### *Ḥayy's Scientific Approach: From Anatomy to Natural Philosophy*

Since Ḥayy gradually ceases to regard the animals as family, it becomes increasingly possible for him to treat them as objects to be used for whatever purpose he deems necessary. This also opens the way to satisfy his curiosity about the workings of their bodies. Dissection of one's own kind always was a difficult point in ancient and medieval culture; it virtually was not allowed. In Ḥayy's earlier years, the gazelles could be seen as his own kind. The death of his foster-mother, the doe, severs the last bond tying him to the animal world, and from that moment on dissection of animal bodies becomes possible. Even vivisection is not out of the question, and Ḥayy's interest in anatomy thus can have free play. Here, he follows in the steps of a long line of classical and medieval physicians for whom dissecting animals was the way to obtain knowledge of the human body. And just as they did, Ḥayy manages in this way to obtain a thorough knowledge

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<sup>42</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Falconry was—and remains—very popular in Middle Eastern countries.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.



of anatomy,<sup>49</sup> which gives Ibn Ṭufayl a good opportunity to bring in his own medical background.<sup>50</sup> Ḥayy's first attempts at obtaining anatomical knowledge are undertaken when he tries to discover the principle of life which he supposes to dwell in the breast. In order to find, and possibly to repair, this organ he dissects his dead foster-mother, and this gives him his first glimpses of the contents of an animal body. His interest, once awakened, makes him pursue this line of research by dissecting other bodies, including live ones;<sup>51</sup> in this way he manages to ascertain that during life the heart is filled with a hot vapor (the vital *pneuma*). Later on he grasps other functions of the body, such as that of the nerves which transport the animal *pneuma* (obtained from the heart) from the brain to the other organs in order to make them function. In this way, he discovers, the organs are mere tools of the life principle residing in the heart.

Ḥayy is then ready for a theoretical approach of a much wider scope. This is the approach, widespread in philosophical and religious circles, of regarding nature (like Ḥayy did<sup>52</sup>) as a testimony of God's bounty and wisdom which stood on a par with divine revelation.

The aim of the medieval philosophers (just as of their classical forebearers) was to understand the principles underlying the functioning of the cosmos: why does creation exist, what kind of order can we detect in it, what decides the coming-to-be and passing-away of created things? These, then, are some of the basic problems discussed in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Ibn Ṭufayl approaches these questions from a Neoplatonic angle, which has some interesting implications for the interpretation of his views on nature. This is especially the case with regard to his views on a) the order of created beings, b) generation, and c) the attitude of man toward creation.

### *The Order of Created Beings*

Ḥayy's little world consists of what is, at first sight, a chaotic mass of discrete phenomena, but one in which he gradually begins to discern system and order. Some things grow, others do not; some move, and others not. The individuals of certain groups resemble each other, without being identical. Some beings bring forth live copies of themselves, others produce eggs (as some animals do) or seeds (as do many plants) from which such individuals may grow.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>50</sup> On the medical career of Ibn Ṭufayl, see Léon Gautier, *Ibn Ṭhofail: sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Paris: Ernest Laroux, 1909), pp. 5–6, 25–26; also the further discussions in this volume by Lawrence Conrad (pp. 7–9, 28–29 above) and Lutz Richter-Bernburg (pp. 90–113 below).

<sup>51</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 50, 55.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

By careful observation and deduction about what things have in common and in what respect they differ, Ḥayy succeeds in discovering the order which encompasses all created beings. His views are summed up in the following terms:<sup>53</sup> at the lowest scale of being stand the four elements, which consist of matter, *hyle*, plus one "form." This implies that they have only one possible motion. Next come bodies composed from the four elements which, because of their composition, have a larger number of "forms" and can be said to possess a larger share of being. If one element strongly prevails in the composition of a body, its existence is more hazardous than if the elements are well-balanced. The better this balance, the more complicated and permanent a body will be, because it can have more "forms:" for in that case the effective powers of one element are not annihilated by the contrary forces of another. So, as the composition of matter becomes more balanced, bodies with a progressively larger hold on existence come into being, among which plants are already so highly developed that they can fulfill some of the functions we associate with life. In animals this is still more the case; they possess a vital spirit of an even stabler equilibrium. And, Ḥayy concludes,<sup>54</sup> it must needs be so that the vital spirit with the most stable equilibrium of all possesses a "form" which almost has no opposite, and thus resembles the heavenly bodies whose "forms" have no opposite at all. The only being that shows signs of resembling the heavenly bodies to such an extent is man, the perfectly balanced living being, the only being aware of the existence of the Creator. Ḥayy thus realizes that he is set apart from all other living beings, and is destined for a different task.

This system is of course the *scala naturae*, the Platonic "chain of being," which was a widely accepted notion among medieval Islamic scholars. Extensive descriptions of nature along these lines are found in the Islamic tradition.<sup>55</sup>

The scale, on the sublunary level, ends with man. The *jinn*, frequently included in other classifications of living beings,<sup>56</sup> seem not to occur in Ḥayy's world. The scale, however, goes on beyond the sublunary level. But there we enter into the realm of celestial beings, spiritual intelligences about whom little can be stated except in the negative: they do not in any

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101–104 (condensed).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>55</sup> For instance, by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il*, II, 152; by al-Qazwīnī, '*Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*', p. 202; and by Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), *Kitāb al-fawz al-aṣghar* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-sa'āda, 1326/1908), pp. 76–83.

<sup>56</sup> For instance, by Ibn al-Athīr (not one of the well-known scholars, but an otherwise unknown author of the same name) in his *Tuḥfat al-gharā'ib*; see Remke Kruk, "Some Late Zoological Texts and their Sources," in *Actas del XII Congreso de la U.E.A.I.* (Malaga, 1984) (Madrid, 1986), p. 424.

respect resemble the earthly beings, since their nature is not compound, and they are not subject to change and decay. Since this part of Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophy transcends the borders of what in modern times is defined as "natural history," we will not pursue it further here.

All this has led Ḥayy to the realization that sublunary creation forms part of an all-encompassing structure, the cosmos, to which it relates as the inside of the belly does to the whole of the animal.<sup>57</sup> The "belly" contains the most despicable parts of the body; it is the place of transformation and decay. Just like the sublunary world, it can bring forth living beings, such as gnats and worms; it is a veritable place of "generation and decay," just as that part of the cosmos enclosed by the sphere of the Moon—the earthly world.

Regarded in this way, the natural world, which seemed at first a bewildering mass of diverse and unrelated phenomena, a multiplicity beyond all comprehension, upon closer scrutiny proves to fall into a number of patterns which continue to repeat themselves on different scales. The example given above—the animal body as a microcosm of which every element has its parallel in the structure of the cosmos as a whole—is such a case. If only one succeeds in analyzing the common denominator, multiplicity becomes unity. This, Ḥayy discovers, also applies to the world of created things, *makhlūqāt*,<sup>58</sup> also sometimes referred to, by others, as the *mawjūdāt* or the *muwalladāt*. For it can roughly be divided into three groups: one group that possesses the common characteristics of having dimension and weight; a second group which in addition to these has the ability to feed itself and to grow, an ability belonging to the "vegetative soul;" and a third group which adds to these the faculty of sensation and of movement of its own free will: it possesses the "animal soul." These groups are the minerals, the plants, and the animals, including man.<sup>59</sup>

Within these groups it is, in turn, possible to detect a certain order. Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān pursues his search for unity by looking for common characteristics among the individuals of these groups, or among individuals of sub-groups. In this way he discovers the existence of plant and animal species, groups of plants and animals which resemble each other to such an extent that they can be said to possess a common "form" (*forma*, *eidos*).<sup>60</sup> The gazelles among which Ḥayy grew up are such a species, and the young they bring forth always share in the common "form." A modern biologist would look here for a definition taking into account the fact of

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<sup>57</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 80.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51–61.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67–68.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

mutual fertility among the members of these groups, but this argument is never brought up by ancient and medieval philosophers.

Ḥayy does not fail to notice that the boundaries between the different “realms” of the scale of beings are by no means sharp. Plants can in general be discerned from animals by their inability to move by volition, but they nevertheless know how to move their roots toward food, and some flowers even turn their heads toward the sun. In this respect, plants do already possess some “animality,”<sup>61</sup> which contributes to the notion of the essential unity of plants and animals.

Ibn Ṭufayl does not go into further detail, but he touches here upon an interesting point: transitional forms between the mineral and the vegetable, the vegetable and the animal world have been pointed out since antiquity. Mushrooms can be considered as stony vegetables, and sponges as vegetable animals; date palms, which have male and female individuals, die when their heads are cut off, and can even fall in love,<sup>62</sup> stand at the top of the vegetable kingdom as animal vegetables.

### *Generation*

How do created things—minerals, plants, animals, and man—come into being? Occasional references imply that Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān was aware of the basic mechanisms of generation, which included spontaneous generation from putrid matter (as happens in the bellies of animals), mating and bringing forth eggs or young,<sup>63</sup> and the reproduction of plants from seeds.<sup>64</sup> But he does not develop any detailed theories about this basic question; Ibn Ṭufayl intended him to discover the necessary existence of a Creator of the whole universe, and Ḥayy’s gradual discovery of this overwhelming truth would go rather badly with preoccupations about the minor details of the generation process. Ibn Ṭufayl himself, however, extensively discusses the question in the first part of his story.

He does not go into the coming-to-be of minerals and plants; his general line of reasoning, however, implies that his point of view in this respect corresponded to that of Neoplatonic philosophy, which held that when the emanative process had reached its final point, a reverse process was set into motion in which creation’s innate urge to return to the One took its course. From matter, *hyle*, the four elements were formed; from them the mineral world was constituted under celestial influence; an additional spiritual element, Vegetable Soul, made possible the coming-to-be of plants,

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Dīnawarī (d. 282/895), *Kitāb al-nabāt (sīn to yā’)*, edited by Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh (Cairo: Institut Français, 1978), p. 303.

<sup>63</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 54, 98.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 112.

and so on. But on the generation of animal life, including that of man, Ibn Ṭufayl has some interesting points to offer.

Since antiquity the generally accepted point of view had been that living beings can be generated in two different ways, namely by parent individuals or spontaneously. Aristotle extensively discussed the subject in his *Generation of Animals*, translated into Arabic in the ninth century. Generation by a parent individual could be the result of the mating of male and female which brings together their respective generative products and eventually results in new individuals, either directly or with eggs as an intermediate stage. The role of each of these generative products was the subject of much discussion: does the female only contribute matter, or also formative influence?<sup>65</sup>

It is to be noted that medieval Islamic, just as classical, science was aware of the fact that a similar sexual differentiation also occurs in certain plants. It was well known that date palms would only bear fruit if some "dust" of the male flower were sprinkled over the female, although there was a difference of opinion as to the exact function which this "dust" performs.<sup>66</sup> A parent individual could also generate a new individual without the cooperation of another, sexually different, individual of the same species: such is the case in many lower animals that bring forth by parthenogenesis.<sup>67</sup>

The other possible means of generation, also generally accepted since antiquity, was that of spontaneous generation.<sup>68</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl refers to it in his comparison of the animal body to the cosmos as a whole.<sup>69</sup> This is of course a question which has remained unsolved to this day, although recent research along the lines set out by Oparin in the 1920s has brought the solution of the problem much nearer. It is obviously true that in the course of time the problem has shifted from the possible spontaneous generation of fairly highly developed animals directly from mud or putrid matter to the spontaneous generation of self-reproductive cells from complicated organic molecules—but this does not change the basic philosophical issue.

<sup>65</sup>On this subject, see, for example, Ursula Weisser, "Die Harmonisierung antiken Zeugungstheorien im islamischen Kulturkreis und ihr Nachwirken im europäischen Mittelalter," in *Orientalische Kultur und europäisches Mittelalter. Miscellanea Mediaevalia 17*, edited by Albert Zimmermann and Ingrid Craemer-Ruegenberg (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), pp. 301–26.

<sup>66</sup>Nicolaus Damascenus, *De plantis: Five Translations*, edited and translated by H.J. Drossaart Lulofs and E.L.J. Poortman (Amsterdam, Oxford, and New York: North Holland Publishing Co., 1989), p. 165; cf. also pp. 139–41.

<sup>67</sup>Ants are one example cited. Cf. Ibn Abī l-Ash'ath, quoted by al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1332), *Nihāyat al-arab wa-funūn al-adab* (Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣriya, 1342/1923–proceeding), X, 174.

<sup>68</sup>See Remke Kruk, "A Frothy Bubble: Spontaneous Generation in the Medieval Islamic Tradition," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 35 (1990), pp. 265–82.

<sup>69</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 80.

Reading a modern survey of research in this field,<sup>70</sup> a scholar familiar with Aristotelian theory cannot help but be fascinated by the parallel notions which crop up in spite of the totally different background of ideas: "stable microbubbles in natural waters,"<sup>71</sup> "some clay particles might have had the chemistry to aid the formation of membranes that shielded them from environmental fluctuations"<sup>72</sup>—it all sounds thoroughly familiar to the reader of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, and one suddenly understands the zeal of those who seek to prove the superior scientific qualities of ancient philosophers by pointing out modern parallels, however doubtful such efforts often may be because of their total disregard of the philosophical background from which those ideas have sprung.<sup>73</sup>

The process of spontaneous generation as seen by Aristotle does not differ essentially from that of sexual (or parthenogenetic) generation, in so far as the basic conditions for each process are that there must be a) matter of the right composition, b) a formative principle to shape this matter, and c) warmth to initiate the generative process. This can be any warmth except that of fire: the heat of fire is considered non-generative.<sup>74</sup> Generative warmth is that produced by the heavenly bodies, by the bodies of animals, and also by fermentation (this is the warmth which was used to hatch eggs<sup>75</sup>).

The possible spontaneous generation of lower animals (and even of rats and eels) was very rarely doubted. I know of only one instance.<sup>76</sup> Plants,

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<sup>70</sup>For instance, Richard Cowen, *History of Life* (Boston: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 12–18; or Freeman J. Dyson, *Origins of Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Information in this field I owe to my colleague Prof. J.A.J. Metz, mathematical biologist.

<sup>71</sup>Cowen, *History of Life*, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>73</sup>Sami S. Hawi, "An Islamic Naturalistic Conception of Abiogenesis—the Views of Ibn Ṭufayl," *Islamic Culture*, 49 (1975), pp. 23–41, which largely follows the lines set out in the same author's *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), is a case in point, although the author puts forth some interesting suggestions.

<sup>74</sup>Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, Loeb translation by A.L. Peck (London: Heinemann, and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 736b30–737a8 (in the standard Bekker numbering). On this question see also the publications of D. Balme, "Development of Biology in Aristotle and Theophrastus—Theory of Spontaneous Generation," *Phronesis*, 7 (1962), pp. 91–104; J.G. Lennox, "Teleology, Chance, and Aristotle's Theory of Spontaneous Generation," *Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 20 (1982), pp. 219–38; Allan Gotthelf, "Teleology and Spontaneous Generation in Aristotle: a Discussion," in *Nature, Knowledge and Virtue: Essays in Memory of Joan Kung*, edited by Terry Penner and Richard Kraut (Edmonton: Academic Printing and Publishing, 1989; *Apeiron*, 22.4), pp. 181–95.

<sup>75</sup>See, for instance, the detailed description 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī gives of the artificial hatching of eggs in *The Eastern Key: Kitāb al-Ifāda wa-l-I'tibār*, translated by Kamal Hafuth Zand and John A. and Ivy E. Videan (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965), pp. 79–89.

<sup>76</sup>Kruk, "A Frothy Bubble," pp. 277–78.

too, can come into being in this way: mosses and lichens may emerge overnight on stones if there is a sufficient amount of moisture available (moisture contains *pneuma*, a necessary condition for generation). It must be conceded that it is not always easy to ascertain the exact opinion of some natural philosophers on the spontaneous generation of plants,<sup>77</sup> since it is not always clear whether by "come into being 'of their own accord' (*min tilqā' nafsihi*)" they mean vegetative reproduction, spontaneous generation, or both.

But can larger beings, such as horses, camels, perhaps even man, also come into being by spontaneous generation? The matter is not brought up by Aristotle, who is the main authority in this field; he seems not to have considered the possibility.

If, however, his theory is pursued to its ultimate implications, this should be possible. The essentials of Aristotle's theory—matter, warmth, and formative principle—have been given above. In the case of generation by parent individuals, these (or rather, the male) bring in the formative principle which causes their offspring to resemble them—but what decides the form in the case of spontaneous generation? Aristotle seems to imply that the environmental circumstances decide the exact nature and composition of the available matter.<sup>78</sup> This much-discussed part of Aristotle's theory is certainly interpreted in such a way in the Islamic cultural tradition; the account the physician Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (d. ca. 300/912) gives of the generation of the parasite guinea-worm (*Dracunculus medinensis*) is a perfect example.<sup>79</sup>

If this is so, then theoretically there is no reason why human beings should not be generated spontaneously, given the right kind of matter and the proper circumstances, however rare these may be. Ibn Ṭufayl does indeed pursue the theory to this consequence by suggesting spontaneous generation as one of the possible ways in which Ḥayy's solitary existence on the island could be explained. Whether Ibn Ṭufayl does so as a purely intellectual exercise or considers it an actual possibility is irrelevant if we are interested in the philosophical implications of his account.

<sup>77</sup>See Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-najāt* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-sa'āda, AH 1331), p. 257.

<sup>78</sup>In the Greek text, *Generation of Animals*, 762a24–28, as well as in the Arabic version, *Generation of Animals: the Arabic Translation Commonly Ascribed to Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq*, edited by J. Brugman and H.J. Drossaart Lulofs (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), 762a24–28. The subject has been extensively and admirably discussed by Herbert A. Davidson in his *Al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 232–57.

<sup>79</sup>Qusṭā ibn Lūqā, *Qusṭā ibn Lūqā's Medical Regimen for the Pilgrims to Mecca*, edited and translated with commentary by Gerrit Bos (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 72–77, 146–48 n. 350.

It should be noted that Ibn Ṭufayl by no means stands alone in pursuing this line of thought. Certain other groups (associated with the magician and alchemist Jābir ibn Ḥayyān) also allow for this possibility, as described in the *Kitāb al-tajmī'*; <sup>80</sup> they even consider possible the *artificial* generation of man, even of a man of the highest spiritual level, namely a prophet.

But in other circles too we find occasional references to this possibility. The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' state that the first male and the first female of each animal species originated from clay (*tīn*), and that so, subsequently, did man.<sup>81</sup> This process took place on an equatorial island, where the natural circumstances were perfect, "and where there is always matter (*mawādd*) available that is ready to receive the ever-present form;" and so man, the apex of sublunary creation, could be generated as well as the other animals. The Ikhwān do not furnish any details about the actual process. Then there is Ibn Ṭufayl's very detailed description, which situates the process on an island that echoes that of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', mixing in some elements from another episode in the *Rasā'il*, namely the *Case of the Animals versus Man*: man covers himself with leaves.<sup>82</sup> Then there is a third, also very detailed, description, namely that of Ibn al-Nafīs (d. 687/1288). Ibn al-Nafīs clearly was inspired by Ibn Ṭufayl: he has conflated Ibn Ṭufayl's two versions of how man might have come to the island into one version, in which man comes into existence by spontaneous generation from a quantity of clay mixed by a flood and then washed into a cave, where it is subsequently sealed off with washed-up earth and vegetable rubbish.<sup>83</sup>

Let us consider what the main elements of Ibn Ṭufayl's account of the generation process are, and how they relate to the other two descriptions.

First he sketches the setting of his story, an equatorial island of paradisiac appearance. As mentioned above, this description strongly recalls the passage in the Ikhwān that describes the perfectly situated equatorial island where Adam and Eve came into being.<sup>84</sup> In this context, the fact may not be without significance that Ibn Ṭufayl begins his description with a reference to "our blessed forefathers," who "tell of a certain Indian island, situated on the equator, where human beings come into being without father or mother. This is possible, they say, because, of all places on earth,

<sup>80</sup>Paul Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān: essai sur l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam*, I: *Textes choisis* (Paris: Maisonneuve, and Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Khānjī, 1935), pp. 341–92.

<sup>81</sup>*Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, II, 155.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 137.

<sup>83</sup>Ibn al-Nafīs, *The Theologus Autodidacticus of Ibn al-Nafīs*, edited and translated by Max Meyerhof and Joseph Schacht (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 4.

<sup>84</sup>See n. 81 above.



that island has the most tempered climate, because a supernal light streams down on it and brings it into the right condition."<sup>85</sup>

Having suggested this possible cause for the existence of human life on the island, Ibn Ṭufayl then sets out to describe in full the process of spontaneous generation of a human being. A condition for the spontaneous generation of man (the highest form of sublunary creation) is that a sufficient amount of appropriate matter be available to make generation possible. Since man (more precisely, the human male) is considered the highest form of creation, this means that the matter of which he consists must necessarily be endowed with the most perfect equilibrium possible in this world, matter which has a constitution in which the contrary forces of the elements are almost perfectly balanced.<sup>86</sup> "The better the blend, the more perfect the form."<sup>87</sup>

Given the ideal circumstances, the most perfect condition of matter must needs develop, which in turn makes possible the spontaneous generation of man. The influence of the heavenly bodies, which "prepare matter," is vital in this respect.<sup>88</sup> The point that the celestial bodies prepare matter to receive its "form" was also articulated by Ibn Sīnā;<sup>89</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl takes it up.<sup>90</sup>

Then, after the "matter" has been brought into the right condition:<sup>91</sup>

In a pocket of earth on that island, over the years, a quantity of clay worked until hot and cold, damp and dry were blended in just the proper way, their strengths perfectly balanced. This fermented mass of clay was quite large, and a certain part of it was in still better equilibrium than the rest, perfectly suited for producing human seminal substance. The middle part was the best proportioned and bore the most perfect equivalence to the composition of a human being. The clay labored and churned, and in the viscous mass there formed what looked like bubbles in boiling water. In the very middle a tiny bubble emerged, divided in half by a delicate membrane and filled by a fine gaseous body, of a perfectly balanced composition. With it at that moment joined "the spirit which is God's," in such a way that neither to

<sup>85</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 20.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>87</sup> H.A. Davidson, "Alfārābī and Avicenna on the Active Intellect," *Viator*, 3 (1972), p. 157.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Nicolaus Damascenus, *De plantis*, p. 184: "from it the forms of the seed will come forth in accordance with the powers of the stars."

<sup>89</sup> Davidson, "Alfārābī and Avicenna on the Active Intellect," p. 156.

<sup>90</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 20, 114.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the senses nor to the mind were the two separable. For it should be clear that this spirit emanates continuously from God—glory be to Him. It is analogous to the sunlight that constantly floods the earth.

So the heart first comes into existence and is filled by the animal *pneuma* (all this is still a mechanical process), and this *pneuma* then serves as the vehicle to which the divine spirit attaches itself, as Ibn Sīnā says,<sup>92</sup> to provide the human embryo with Soul. Subsequently the other major organs—the brain and liver—are formed; the powers that are in them place themselves under the command of the spirit located in the heart,<sup>93</sup> and the embryo develops until it is fully completed and bursts forth from its clay envelope. The whole process, as set forth by Ibn Ṭufayl, closely corresponds to the formulation of Ibn Sīnā: when matter reaches the highest possible degree of homogeneity, it receives the human soul, which is an incorporeal substance.<sup>94</sup>

As to the origin of the soul, Ibn Ṭufayl's account is unambiguous. His description clearly shows that he assumes that the divine, immortal part of the human soul is communicated to the body by emanation from the divine principle.

But it is not altogether easy to decide from this account what Ibn Ṭufayl's standpoint was as to the origin of the "form" of his spontaneously generated human being. That he takes the celestial bodies to prepare matter for the "form" is clearly stated,<sup>95</sup> but does he also postulate a celestial intelligence to donate the form? The impression that might arise from the passage quoted above is that matter, activated by warmth, of its own accord produces a being. In other words, it already possesses the potential form, and it only needs activating warmth in order to begin generating, as Aristotle's words in the *Generation of Animals* seem to imply.<sup>96</sup> If this

<sup>92</sup> *De Anima*, pp. 263–64.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 264–65.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261:14–18 (condensed).

<sup>95</sup> For a discussion of this matter, see Charles Touati, "Les problèmes de la génération et le rôle de l'intellect agent chez Averroès," in *Multiple Averroès: Actes du Colloque International organisé à l'occasion du 850e anniversaire de la naissance d'Averroès, Paris 20–23 septembre 1976* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978), p. 160, who gives an lucid account of Ibn Rushd's refutation of Themistius' ideas in this respect; also Charles Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: a Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), pp. 24–32.

<sup>96</sup> Whether Aristotle was in fact of the opinion that in spontaneous generation the activating effect of warmth also implied a formative effect, just as in sexual generation, where the warmth contained in the seed of the male has formative power, is a subject of much discussion; see Lennox, "Teleology, Chance, and Aristotle's Theory of Spontaneous Generation." See also above, p. 83 and n. 78.

is indeed Ibn Ṭufayl's view, that would give him an intermediate position between al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā on the one hand (who acknowledge the preparing as well as the form-giving function of the celestial bodies), and Ibn Rushd, who denies both. But to decide this important point, we must look for additional information elsewhere in the story.

Before doing so, however, a brief remark must be made on the way in which Ibn al-Nafīs, in his *Al-Risāla al-kāmilīya* (*Theologus Autodidacticus*), modified the story of the generation process which he took over from Ibn Ṭufayl. In the account of Ibn al-Nafīs, no mention is made of a divine spirit entering the developing embryo from without: "When this clay had become hot, there had evaporated from it many vapors, some of which were refined and air-like and similar in temperament to that of the human spirit (*rūḥ*); so human spirit became formed out of them, and in this manner the formation of a man was completed."<sup>97</sup> This implies a philosophical attitude very different from that of Ibn Ṭufayl: here the Neoplatonic element is wholly absent, and only immanent causes for the generation process are given.

### *Ibn Ṭufayl's Attitude toward Nature*

When Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān had come to the conclusion that creation as a whole originated from an eternal and immaterial Being, and that of all created beings man was the only one to possess a soul which enabled him to be aware of the existence of this Being,<sup>98</sup> he longed to come near to it in order to unite his soul, the particle of divine spirit housed in his body, with this Being to which it belongs. But how could this be achieved? We then come to a passage which at first sight looks particularly endearing. As stated earlier, there is even some danger of identifying Ḥayy as the first ecology-conscious person in the Islamic world. The passage, as we will see, is also of some relevance for the interpretation of Ibn Ṭufayl's views about the question I brought up above, namely that of the form-donating function of the celestial intelligences:

For Ḥayy had decided that the only way open to him to come near to the One Necessary Being was to resemble as much as possible the celestial bodies, which were so near to Him. And accordingly he tried to imitate the heavenly bodies in all their aspects: their luminous appearance by being as clean as possible; their rotations by making circular movements; and his imitation also involved that he tried to obstruct the intentions of

<sup>97</sup> Ibn al-Nafīs, *Theologus Autodidactus*, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳzān*, pp. 98, 104.

the Creator as little as possible by taking the utmost care with His creation. He had needs to destroy other creatures, plants, or animals, in order to save his own body from destruction; but in doing so he tried to cause as little damage as possible. He did not eat rare species, because they might become extinct; if he ate fruits, he planted the kernels in the earth; and he tried to help plants and animals whose existence was in some way threatened (he watered plants, saved animals from predators).<sup>99</sup>

I have deliberately formulated the contents of this episode in modern ecological terms, in order to stress the point that although this kind of behavior may be perfectly plausible for twentieth-century man, such was not at all the case for medieval Islamic culture. Care for nature was a highly unlikely notion in Ibn Ṭufayl's day, although there is some evidence of compassion with animals.<sup>100</sup> Imitation of the heavenly bodies is the reason Ibn Ṭufayl gives; but how is this "imitation" to be analyzed? Why the insistence, for instance, on the preservation of species?

In Neoplatonically influenced Muslim thought (Ibn Sīnā, for instance) the celestial intelligences embodied in the heavenly spheres hand down by way of the active intellect the abstract "forms," which then become embedded in matter to create the corruptible world below the sphere of the Moon, the sphere where forms only remain joined to matter for a short period. Not only the individual, but also the species as a whole has a form,<sup>101</sup> which would become irretrievably lost with its extinction. So what Ḥayy is doing is trying to preserve as many forms as possible. He cannot wholly avoid destroying some; the demands of his body force him to do so; but he does his utmost to minimize the damage to creation implied in fulfilling the needs of his body.

What Ḥayy is doing here is imitating the form-preserving activity of the celestial intelligences, probably more specifically of the active intellect, described as "the enigmatic Aristotelian notion of the Active Intellect which, in an interpretation ultimately deriving from Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, and Themistius, was supposed to endow sublunary substances with forms: it was generally held that the Active Intellect both informs matter and maintains the forms, thus preventing the substances from disintegrating under the opposite action of their constituents."<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111–15.

<sup>100</sup> As, for instance, by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' in the *Case of the Animals against Man before the King of the Jinn*, where feelings of compassion with lower creatures are explicitly expressed.

<sup>101</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 66.

<sup>102</sup> Gad Freudenthal, "The Theory of the Opposites and an Ordered Universe: Physics and Metaphysics in Anaximander," *Phronesis*, 31.3 (1986), p. 226.

As I have already pointed out with regard to his account of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation, Ibn Ṭufayl seems to be of the opinion that the celestial bodies/intelligences do not pass on the forms, but merely prepare matter for the reception of the forms emanating from the Necessary Being. This is confirmed by what Ibn Ṭufayl says: the heavenly bodies *prepare* the world for the outpouring of spiritual forms upon it from the Necessary Being.<sup>103</sup> This leaves uncertain whether they actually were instrumental in *handing down* the forms. But such may possibly be inferred from the fact that the other function generally ascribed to the active intellect—caring for sublunary creation and preserving forms—is maintained by Ibn Ṭufayl as one of the roles of the celestial intelligences.

This is the function imitated by Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān; and if we want to describe this as ecology-conscious behavior, we certainly must realize that it is pursued for a reason entirely different from that of most modern ecologists, whose motives are generally of an immanent nature: the world will become a very unpleasant place to live in if we do not treat it with prudence and care. Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, on the other hand, could not have cared less what happened to the world: he sought, as much as possible, to free himself from everything that belonged to it, even from his own feelings of compassion for his fellow creatures,<sup>104</sup> and to rise above the despicable level of generation and decay in order to be part again of the eternal and immutable world.

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<sup>103</sup> Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, p. 117.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MEDICINA ANCILLA PHILOSOPHIAE: IBN ṬUFAYL'S *ḤAYY IBN YAQẒĀN*

Lutz Richter-Bernburg  
(Universität Leipzig)

Ibn Ṭufayl was undoubtedly among the most trusted courtiers of the Muwaḥḥid caliphs Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (r. 558–80/1163–84) and Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb (r. 580–95/1184–99). Had he not served them to their continuous satisfaction, they would hardly have kept him on their payroll for decades,<sup>1</sup> and it was reportedly for no other reason than advanced age and failing health that Ibn Ṭufayl resigned his office of physician-in-ordinary in 578/1182. Even during retirement he retained his position as the caliph's intimate companion and adviser, and after his death he was singularly honored by the caliph, who personally officiated at the exequies.<sup>2</sup> Thus far the facts are clear. Yet we may ask whether Ibn Ṭufayl did indeed owe his exalted position to his medical skills rather than to, say, his easy and witty company, poetical talent, well-rounded general education, or shrewd political advice. As a member of the Muwaḥḥid medical corps, Ibn Ṭufayl

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<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed treatment of his biography and exact references to the sources, see Lawrence I. Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids: Some Notes on the Public Career of Ibn Ṭufayl," *Al-Qanṭara*, 16 (1995), pp. 3–13; and the contributions to this volume by Conrad (pp. 5–22 above) and Vincent J. Cornell (pp. 133–37 below).

<sup>2</sup>See Ibn Ṣāḥib al-Ṣalāh (fl. ca. 590/1194), *Ta'rīkh al-mann bi-l-imāma 'alā l-mustad'afīn*, II, edited by 'Abd al-Hādī al-Tāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus li-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-nashr, 1383/1964), pp. 409:17–410:3, 411:1–6, 439 (with notes); cf. al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1631), *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, edited by R.P.A. Dozy, Gustave Dugat, Ludolf Krehl, and William Wright (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1855–61), I, 399:12–15; al-Marrākushī (wr. 621/1224), *Al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, edited by R.P.A. Dozy, 2nd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1881), pp. 172:4–176:1; Ibn al-Abbār (d. 658/1260), *Al-Muqṭadab min kitāb tuḥfat al-qadīm*, edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-gharb al-islāmī, 1406/1986), pp. 96–99 no. 43 (with refs.); (Ibn al-'Idhārī, wr. late 7th/13th c., in?) Ibn Abī Zar' (d. ca. 710/1310), as quoted in Léon Gauthier, *Ibn Thofāil: sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909), p. 19.

may well have had supervisory rather than practical functions. His literary activity in the field of medicine would not speak against such a supposition; rather, as far as the “academic” aspect of the discipline is concerned, his writing would tend to confirm the sources’ positive assessment of his medical competence. However, his practical acumen cannot be judged on the basis of the available biographical information.

If we were to base our judgment of Ibn Ṭufayl exclusively on the testimony of medieval authors, it would seem fair, given the standards of the time, to credit him with broad-based medical training.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the evidence is not unambiguous. The favorable opinion that the biographical sources hold of Ibn Ṭufayl’s medical knowledge was quite plausibly derived from his high rank at court as much as from his literary production or his actual therapeutic skills. Moreover, medieval judgments of contemporary or near-contemporary physicians’ professional competence need not necessarily agree with a modern student’s considered opinion of those same individuals, as is amply proven by such biographers as al-Qiftī (d. 646/1248) and Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a (d. 668/1270). In order to arrive at a balanced assessment, their lavish—and seemingly indiscriminate—praise will have to be sifted carefully in each individual case and, more to the point, compared with the respective author’s works themselves, as far as these are extant and available.<sup>4</sup>

As for Ibn Ṭufayl, the present study will try to undertake exactly that task: it will examine *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡẓān* in light of the fact that its author was

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<sup>3</sup>In addition to the more strictly “biographical” sources, see al-Shaqundī (d. 629/1231), in al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, II, 130:17, where Ibn Ṭufayl is named first among eminent Andalusian physicians, but his title of glory is his excellence in philosophy and *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡẓān*! Remarkably enough, Ibn Sa’īd (d. 685/1286) omits Ibn Ṭufayl altogether from his epistle on Andalusian luminaries, which is to supplement and update, as it were, that of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) on the same subject. The *Kitāb al-taysīr* of Ibn Zuhr (d. 596/1199) takes pride of place among works on medicine, whereas the precarious situation of philosophy in al-Andalus is illustrated with a reference to the tribulations Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) and Ibn Ḥabīb al-Qasrī (killed at the orders of “Ma’mūn Banī ‘Abd al-Mu’mīn, r. 624–29/1227–32) had to suffer under the Muwaḥḥid regime (in al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-tīb*, II, 125:13–14, 19–23). Ibn Sa’īd’s silence here is all the more remarkable since in his *Mughrib* he does name Ibn Ṭufayl under the rubric of “scholars” (‘ulamā’) as a physician and philosopher from among the notables of Tājila; furthermore, he reports that Ibn Ṭufayl spent his last years there under house arrest after being suspected of lethally poisoning his master Abū Ya’qūb Yūsuf in 580/1184; see his *Al-Mughrib fī ḥulā al-Maghrib*, edited by Shawqī Dayf (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-ma‘ārif, 1955–64), II, 85–86 no. 403.

<sup>4</sup>As an example of such study, see Manfred Ullmann, “Die Tadkira des ibn as-Suwaidī, eine wichtige Quelle zur Geschichte der griechisch-arabischen Medizin und Magie,” *Der Islam*, 54 (1977), pp. 33–65. Cf. also Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’a, ‘*Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’*’, edited by August Müller (Cairo: Al-Maṭba‘a al-wahbiya, 1299/1882–Königsberg: August Müller, 1884), II, 266:9–267:29.

a physician by training, even though the text's frame of reference has no bearing on medicine at all. A definitive judgment of Ibn Ṭufayl's command of medicine itself would have to be based on his only work in that field still known to exist, the *Long Urjūza*.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Aristotelian Context*

In his metaphysical tale, Ibn Ṭufayl evidently assumes the philosopher's garb and, similar to such of his illustrious predecessors as al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), and—*mutatis mutandis*—al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), does not allow what he must have considered his subordinate avocation to interfere with the loftier purposes of his philosophical vocation. For instance, he goes so far as to feign ignorance of some basic and universally accepted biological data.<sup>6</sup> It would seem somewhat simplistic to attribute this to mindlessly compartmentalized thinking. Instead, Ibn Ṭufayl must have had some ulterior purpose in suppressing certain facts that he could count on his prospective readers to supply from their own experience; by ostensibly bending reality in an arbitrary fashion, he was able to direct his readers' attention to implications that he chose not to spell out directly. Such handling of medical tenets would alone suffice to show that Ibn Ṭufayl's standing as a theoretician of medicine proper, let alone as a practitioner, cannot be gauged on the basis of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*.

Quite apart from this aspect, however, Ibn Ṭufayl generally reduces the role of medicine as an empirical discipline to that of a handmaiden of philosophical theory, and consequently deprives it of its dignity as a science in its own right. In this, Ibn Ṭufayl shows himself beholden to a brand of Aristotelianism reminiscent of Ibn Sīnā, rather than to the more specifically Galenist tradition among Islamic medical authors of both the eastern and western lands of Islam. The theoretical side, or even the "physical" basis—in medieval Islamic terms—of medical science, commanded his attention, much to the neglect of practice-oriented aspects. Given the rich Andalusian tradition in medical scholarship, it would, even at first sight, appear rash to charge Ibn Ṭufayl with mere ignorance; rather, the model for his particular outlook will have to be sought elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup>MS Fez, Jāmi'at al-qarawīyīn, no. 3158/50 L; Ibn Ṭufayl's correspondence with Ibn Rushd on the latter's therapeutic principles in his *Kullīyāt* (Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Uyūn al-anbā'*, II, 78:4–5) has not yet been found. Ibn Ṭufayl's modern biographer, Léon Gauthier, was not prepared to grant him any originality in the field of medicine (*Ibn Ṭhofaīl*, pp. 25–26); even though his judgment was obviously derived from nineteenth century "progressist" standards, he may, in effect, not have been too far off the mark. For a digest of the *Urjūza*, see Maḥmūd al-Ḥājj Qāsim Muḥammad, "Qirā'a fī urjūzat Ibn Ṭufayl fī l-ṭibb," *Majallat Ma'had al-makhṭūṭāt al-'arabīya*, 30 (1986), pp. 47–82.

<sup>6</sup>See below, p. 99–107.



Indeed, Ibn Ṭufayl seems to have been among the first scholars in the Maghrib, if not the very first himself, to represent that overbearing Aristotelianism which also informs the works of his followers al-Biṭrūjī (d. 581/1185) and Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198).<sup>7</sup> In the interest of logical coherence and philosophical uniformity, the doctrines of the First Teacher, considered infallible, were upheld even when at variance with the more advanced results of Hellenistic positive empirical science: medicine's Galen and astronomy's Ptolemy had to cede to the Stagirite's authority. In the case of too-patent discrepancies between his views and received knowledge, an alternative expedient was adopted in order to defuse the issue: either Aristotle was conveniently reinterpreted in the light of later discoveries, or there was an attempt to accommodate these by devising a two-tiered system of scientific knowledge. Thus, Aristotle had laid out the general principles and basic contents of each science—its universals, or *kullīyāt*—once and for all; later scholars could do no more than contribute completions and additions, in Ibn Rushd's words *tatmīmāt wa-ziyāda*.<sup>8</sup>

By proffering such a scheme, the disputants were free to use arguments from either side as best suited them. That this facile arrangement could only be arrived at on the basis of very selective perception—not to call it, less indulgently, (self-)deception—does not seem to have bothered anybody, even if it was recognized. Perhaps this is too harsh a judgment,

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<sup>7</sup>On al-Biṭrūjī and his reference to Ibn Ṭufayl, see Gauthier, *Ibn Thofaīl*, pp. 21, 26–29; also Gauthier's remarks in the Introduction to his edition of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), iv. See also Bernard R. Goldstein, *Al-Biṭrūjī On the Principles of Astronomy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), esp. I, 3–4, 61; II, 49:1–13. On Ibn Rushd's regressive Aristotelianism, see Helmut Gätje, "Averroes als Aristoteleskommentator," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 114 (1964), pp. 59–65. Cf. *idem*, "Die 'inneren' Sinne bei Averroes," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 115 (1965), pp. 255–93, esp. 289–93; and, with special reference to astronomy, Charles Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: a Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), pp. 54–55. J. Christoph Bürgel, while recognizing the spiteful and essentially reactionary character of Ibn Rushd's criticism of Galen and his followers, still attempts to exonerate him from the charge of dogmatism. Apparently taking his lead from Ibn Rushd's renaissance editors, Bürgel would like to retain him as a force of progress in his panorama of the forward march of science. See his "Averroes 'contra Galenum'," *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 1967, no. 9, pp. 263–340, esp. 289, 297, 314–17.

<sup>8</sup>*Colliget* II.19, quoted in Bürgel, "Averroes 'contra Galenum'," p. 326:84–91. It is not without interest to compare Ibn Rushd's attitude with the expedient adopted by his (frequently criticized) predecessor Ibn Sīnā. Conveniently retreating to the level of generalities, which spares him the embarrassment of defending Aristotle's primitive physiology, he wholeheartedly subscribes to the philosopher's authority, yet to all practical intents and purposes adheres to Galen in his actual exposition of the subject (see below, n. 10).

though. Since medicine, at least at the “academic” level, had long turned from the study of empirical phenomena to the scrutiny of books, the doctrines transmitted there could no longer be examined for their accuracy in describing reality, but rather were examined exclusively for their internal coherence or their merit in terms of the underlying (meta)physical frame of reference.<sup>9</sup> Whether this holds true for medieval Islamic astronomy as well will have to be left undecided in this context. At any rate, the established precedence of the philosopher over the specialized scientist, be he physician or astronomer, would normally have quieted troublesome thoughts about conflicts between their respective claims.

In tune with the preceding observations, the sources of Ibn Ṭufayl’s outlook on medicine in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* are to be found in al-Fārābī’s and Ibn Sīnā’s separation between medicine as an epistemologically inferior and application-oriented discipline on the one hand, and its propedeutic theoretical basis, considered part of natural philosophy, on the other.<sup>10</sup> This

<sup>9</sup>In his critique of Galen, al-Fārābī all but acknowledges this situation: “Truly, that is a disagreement concerning what either one of them reports as having seen and witnessed with his own eyes; that is a disagreement concerning what to examine and to grasp the truthful one of the two propositions will not come easy to us, for that would be contingent upon our own autopsy of what they mention as having seen in man with their own eyes; that would only be possible through a probe by anatomical dissection; to do that is only remotely possible and very difficult. The [other] disagreement concerning what either one of them mentions as having inferred by syllogism (*qiyās*), evidence (*dalīl*), or apodeictic proof (*burhān*): it is within reach of man to examine either one of the two syllogisms through the rules (*qawānīn*) which we were given and which we learned from the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*; that is possible and easy and is accomplished in the simplest way and the fastest time.” See al-Fārābī’s *Risāla fī l-radd ‘alā Jālīnūs fīmā nāqaḍa fīhi Aristūṭālīs*, in *Rasā’il falsafīya li-l-Kindī wa-l-Fārābī wa-bn-Bājjā wa-bn-‘Adī*, edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Benghazi: Al-Jāmi‘a al-Lībīya, 1393/1973), p. 61:12–21.

<sup>10</sup>In his *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm*, al-Fārābī defines medicine as a “political” discipline (*‘ilm madanī*) involving extensive practical application as well as a command of theoretical precepts; see *Al-Farabi: Catálogo de las ciencias*, edited by Angel González Palencia (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1953), p. 94:9–15. Of other works of his that contain pertinent remarks, suffice it to cite the polemical *Al-Radd ‘alā Jālīnūs*, pp. 38–107, where he sharply contrasts Galen’s and Aristotle’s methods of inquiry, one being medical and the other “physical.” Medicine, defined along similar lines as in the *Iḥṣā’* and contingent upon the knowledge and manipulation of particular sensibles, is distinguished from physics, which, as a purely theoretical science and exclusively concerned with universals, attains apodeictic certainty (*ibid.*, pp. 38:13–40:20, 43:12–16; here follows a long disquisition on agreements and differences of the two disciplines, through p. 54:18). In the sequel, al-Fārābī accuses Galen of willfully misconstruing Aristotle’s use of “paths” for “nerves,” and generally, of a negative bias toward the Stagiritic in comparison with his efforts to defend Hippocrates against imputations of error (*ibid.*, pp. 57:2–60:13, 103:19–104:3). For a detailed discussion of al-Fārābī’s definition and critique of medicine, see Friedrich W. Zimmermann, “Al-Fārābī und die philosophische Kritik an Galen von Alexander zu Averroes,” *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976; *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte

branch of medicine was thus invested with the higher dignity of demonstrative science, which was concerned with universals and exempt from the physician's qua physician's competence; very properly, it fell within the philosopher's purview instead. Consequently, in discussing medical subjects in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, Ibn Ṭufayl consistently employs terms denoting natural philosophy, *ṭabī'īyāt*;<sup>11</sup> only once does he use a derivation of the root *ṭabba*, and that in the context of an argument against the majority of philosophers and physicians, contrasting mere opinions on their part with the proofs furnished by the apodeictic science of nature.<sup>12</sup>

What has been said so far can be summed up as follows: Ibn Ṭufayl fits into the well-established tradition of qualifying and belittling the import of empirical research in the name of Aristotelian logic and epistemology. In the case of medicine and its paragon, Galen, the arguments used include a criticism of medicine's preoccupation with the particular and the contingent,

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Folge, Nr. 98), pp. 401–14; *idem*, trans., *Al-Fārābī's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* (London: British Academy, 1981), index, p. 269a, s.v. "Galen." Cf. Gotthard Strohmaier, "Al-Fārābī über die verschollene Aristotelesschrift 'Über Gesundheit und Krankheit' und über die Stellung der Medizin im System der Wissenschaften," *Aristoteles als Wissenschaftstheoretiker*, edited by Johannes Irmscher and Reimar Müller (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983), pp. 202–205.

Ibn Sīnā, adopting al-Fārābī's outlook on the relationship between "physics" and medicine and his condescending attitude toward Galen as a philosopher, consistently subordinates medical inquiry to the general principles furnished by "physics;" regarding points of dispute, he invariably accords precedence to philosophy, albeit a philosophy amenable to the results of Galen's medical research. See, for example, his *Al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* (Būlāq: Al-Maṭba'a al-amīriyya al-kubrā, AH 1294), I, 5:3–16, 20ult–21:18, 67:1–16, 72:20–28; *Al-Shifā'*, *al-Ṭabī'īyāt* VIII: *al-Ḥayawān*, edited by Ibrāhīm Madkūr et al. (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-miṣriyya al-'amma li-l-ta'līf wa-l-nashr, 1390/1970), pp. 40:3–44:8, 146:9–11, 226:15–16, 254:13–14. Even in the *Qānūn*, Ibn Sīnā attributes Galen's writing on physiology and other basic subjects of medicine merely to a desire to pose as philosopher (I, 5:16–18: *lākin min jihati annahu yuḥibbu an yakūna faylasūfan yatakallamu fī l-'ilmi l-ṭabī'ī*); as has been said before (n. 8 above), notwithstanding his epistemological strictures against Galen, Ibn Sīnā would not think of deviating from his doctrine within the confines of medicine proper. His approach is graphically illustrated by his unquestioning acceptance of, for example, Galen's assertion of the vital function of the nerves (e.g., *Qānūn*, I, 20:3–4, 21:21–22). The question arises of how seriously his protestations of overriding loyalty to Aristotle and his sarcasm toward Galen are to be taken; concretely, as regards the disputed communication of the nerves with the brain, he does no more than express an "inclination" towards Aristotle's view. His noncommittal attitude appears designed to leave all roads open to him, and indeed, invites ironic comment on the part of the modern student (*Al-Ḥayawān min al-Shifā'*, p. 40:4–10).

Ibn Sīnā considered medicine to be an easy subject; see William E. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sina: a Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), p. 24:7–26:4. This appears to have been a common opinion; thus the Muwaḥḥid caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf is reported to have begun his "philosophical" studies with medicine as well. See al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, pp. 170:18–171:1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, esp. pp. 13:1–2, 21:4, 32:10–11, 51:1–2, 65:7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20:9–11.

which precludes the formulation of universally valid rules and does not allow of apodeictic conclusions; furthermore, al-Fārābī's refutation, on logical grounds, of Galen's anatomical experiments as scientific proofs left its mark even on the intramedical discussion, as can be seen in Ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn*.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, neither Galen's alleged logical shortcomings nor the contested validity of his anatomical experiments by themselves sufficiently explain the Islamic philosophers' dispute with Galen the physician; taking their cue from Alexander of Aphrodisias—or rather, his traditional persona—they gave vent to pique which had nothing to do with the merits of the cause. By venturing into the field of logic and epistemology and daring to argue against Aristotle, Galen was thought to have overstepped his competence and presumed on the philosophers' prerogative.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to all this, though, yet another motive may have compelled late classical, and even more markedly so, medieval Islamic scholars to uphold Aristotle's supremacy in the realm of knowledge and science at nearly all costs. In general, the existence of substantive disagreements over fundamentals in their respective disciplines greatly disturbed these scholars' minds. Reluctance to suffer such discomfort may have been sufficient reason for their sustained efforts to smooth over areas of conflict or to circumvent them by investing one sole representative with ultimate authority. Also, the concept of "scientific" truth shared one essential feature with that of religious truth: both constituted an immutable, yet historically transmitted, finite body of knowledge. Just as the divine dispensation had been

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<sup>13</sup> *Qānūn*, I, 67:12–13: "Their (i.e. the physicians') propositions are derived from a persuasive, not stringent premiss; they merely adhere to the external evidence of things," cf. also *Al-Ḥayawān min al-Shifā'*, pp. 41:12–42:15, 43:18–44:1: "Nothing of what the Most Excellent Physician proposes is stringent even if he wagers and deposits [a considerable purse of] gold coins with the priest of the temple as an award to whoever proves to him that the nerves spring from the heart." For Ibn Sīnā's dependence on al-Fārābī, cf. the latter's *Al-Radd 'alā Jālīnūs*, esp. pp. 65pu–106:6; *Kitāb al-amkina al-mughlīṭa* and *Kitāb al-tahlīl*, both quoted in Zimmermann, "Al-Fārābī und die philosophische Kritik an Galen," p. 411 nn. 53–54.

<sup>14</sup> See al-Fārābī, *Al-Radd 'alā Jālīnūs*, esp. pp. 60:11–13, 103:11–15, 104:3–5; *idem*, *Kitāb al-khiṭāba*, edited in J. Langhade, *Al-Farabi—deux ouvrages inédits sur la rhétorique* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1971), pp. 71:8–10, 71:13–73:2, 75:4–7, 77:4–6, 10–13, 79:9–11 (cf. Zimmermann, "Al-Fārābī und die philosophische Kritik an Galen," pp. 404–405); Bürgel, "Averroes 'contra Galenum'," pp. 286–88; Nicholas Rescher and Michael E. Marmura, *The Refutation by Alexander of Aphrodisias of Galen's Treatise on the Theory of Motion* (Islamabad: Central Institute of Islamic Research, 1965), esp. p. 3, to which cf. Nicholas Rescher, *Temporal Modalities in Arabic Logic* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1967), pp. 2, 46–48. In actual fact, Galen's and Alexander's relationship may have been much less contentious than it was perceived to be by Islamic tradition; see Zimmermann, "Al-Fārābī und die philosophische Kritik an Galen," pp. 409–10; Pierre Thillet, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise: traité du destin* (Paris: "Les belles lettres," 1984), esp. pp. xxxii–xlix.

the same for all prophets, the authorities among the philosophers had to be, and were shown to be, essentially in agreement with each other;<sup>15</sup> even better, if their agreement could be proven to encompass divine revelation as well. Of course, Ibn Ṭufayl was not alone in this regard.

In the preceding introductory remarks, Ibn Ṭufayl has been viewed primarily within the tradition of the *falāsifa*, and more generally, that of the “sciences of the ancients.” Yet, however deeply he was rooted in this tradition, we cannot continue before identifying one more thread in the fabric of his thought; this is al-Ghazālī’s influence, which, notwithstanding a fundamental difference of perspective, can be strongly felt in some of the anthropological passages of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.<sup>16</sup>

The discussion following will focus on those sections of the text which are of particular interest from the point of view of biology and medicine: Ibn Ṭufayl’s account of spontaneous generation; his embryology (if it can be called that), which he sketches in the outline of Ḥayy’s development following spontaneous generation; closely related to that, his system of anatomy in the narrative of Ḥayy’s biological experiments after the death of his foster mother; and lastly, the heptadic scheme Ibn Ṭufayl employs for dividing and ordering Ḥayy’s life and development.

### *The Spontaneous Generation of Ḥayy*

In Ibn Ṭufayl’s account of Ḥayy’s spontaneous generation, strands from the most heterogeneous traditions are combined in order to stress Ḥayy’s prophetic status and closeness to God on the one hand, and on the other, to keep the narration as far removed as possible from the merely legendary and miraculous and as acceptable as possible to the scientific mind.<sup>17</sup> Basically, Ibn Ṭufayl effects this through an integration of al-Ghazālī’s reading of the Qur’ānic account of Adam’s—and Jesus’—creation into an Aristotelian system of biology. Of course, “Aristotelian” is here meant, rather broadly, to extend to Ibn Sīnā’s biological thought as expressed, for example, in his *Shifā’*; it thus includes a goodly admixture of Neoplatonism. In fact,

<sup>15</sup> Al-Fārābī’s *Jam‘ bayna ra’yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa-Aristūṭālīs*, edited by Albert N. Nader (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1960), may be cited here as representative of the large number of related works; cf. Muhsin Mahdi, *Alfarabi’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), esp. p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> This is not to deny his wider influence on Ibn Ṭufayl’s thought, discussed elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> The following paragraphs will concentrate as far as possible on the *biological* aspects of Ibn Ṭufayl’s anthropological thought; an exhaustive study of the *philosophical* tradition behind it is not intended, even though the borderline between the two areas cannot always be neatly drawn. Cf. the translation of the text by Lenn Evan Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl’s Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān: a Philosophical Tale* (New York: Twayne, 1972), pp. 106–108, and notes, pp. 190–92.

emanationism provides the author with a unifying veneer for the diverse elements of his own relation.<sup>18</sup>

As indicated above, Ibn Ṭufayl is at pains to formulate the concept of spontaneous generation in terms unassailable on scientific grounds. Preparing the stage by an elaborate argument for the possibility of life in the earth's equatorial regions, he undertakes to prove that they are, contrary to the claims of most philosophers and physicians, not excessively hot, which would make them inhospitable to life, but actually are the most temperate of all climes; thus they constitute a perfect environment for the existence of the highest form of organic life.<sup>19</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl's insistence on such physical conditions is not without support in the tradition of *falsafa*. As Ibn Sīnā taught, the further "elemental bodies" were removed from the extremes of hot and cold, moist and dry, and the closer they came to a mean balance, the more closely they resembled the eternal celestial bodies and the more receptive they became to the enlivening power of the separate substance regent; ultimately they were able to be informed by an essence which approximated that of the substance regent and of the celestial substances.<sup>20</sup> Ibn Sīnā illustrates his argument by way of a "physical" simile in which a fire or a sun takes the place of the separate substance, while a body, such as a ball, represents the organism that is to undergo the effect of the fire or the sun. In the image, the degree of calefaction corresponds to the vegetative soul, incandescence to the animal soul, inflammation to the human soul.

Ibn Ṭufayl combined this doctrine of Ibn Sīnā with Aristotle's concept of spontaneous generation, as formulated in *De generatione animalium* and as restated, more loosely, by Ibn Sīnā.<sup>21</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl thus arrived at an

<sup>18</sup>On—broadly defined—Neoplatonic traditions in fourth/tenth century Muslim thought, cf. Susanne Diwald, *Arabische Philosophie und Wissenschaft in der Enzyklopädie Kitāb Ihwān aṣ-ṣafā'* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), p. 618b:3–6 (index), s.v. "Neuplatonismus."

<sup>19</sup>See Goodman, *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 103–105 (with notes).

<sup>20</sup>*De anima*, edited by Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 258:10–260:3, 261:8–16; cf. *Al-Shifā'*, *al-ṭabī'iyāt* II–IV, edited by Ibrāhīm Madkūr et al. (Cairo: Dār al-kātib al-'arabī li-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-nashr, 1389/1969), pp. 190:10–191:11, 259:7–260:6.

<sup>21</sup>*De generatione animalium* III.2, 762a8–27; cf. David Mowbray Balme, *Aristotle's De Partibus Animalium I and De Generatione Animalium I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), esp. pp. 128, 162 (commentary on the passage cited); *idem*, "Development of Biology in Aristotle and Theophrastus: Theory of Spontaneous Generation," *Phronesis*, 7 (1962), pp. 91–104. It is well to remember that Aristotle speaks only of certain testaceans in this passage, and that in his view spontaneously generated animals are not exempt from certain biological laws: they cannot but be one or the other, larvae or eggs (762b28–34). He adds hypothetically that this alternative might also apply to primordial man and quadrupeds, if—as at times occurred—a tellurian descent were claimed for them (cf. Plato, *Republic*, 269b). In Ibn Sīnā's rendering of the passage (*Al-Ḥayawān*

entirely natural causation of the tellurian–celestial generation of man that dispensed with human agents altogether.<sup>22</sup> The entelechy of man as the highest species of animate life in the sublunar world is the animal spirit, *al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*, informing all such life and most purely “embodied” in the spiritual celestial beings.<sup>23</sup> However, Ibn Ṭufayl also had to account for the human intellect, which Aristotle himself had already termed a “somewhat divine” element and which alone constituted man as man.<sup>24</sup> In order to do so, Ibn Ṭufayl introduced the personal creator God of the Qur’ān, replacing Ibn Sīnā’s separate substance as the “giver of forms” and thus modifying him in one crucial aspect.<sup>25</sup>

### *Embryology and Human Ontogeny*

In *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, the “form” God gives to man is “the spirit from my Lord’s own;”<sup>26</sup> it divinely informs man’s animal spirit and conjugates with it in a union which is, sensibly and intellectually, all but inseparable.<sup>27</sup> Through the animal spirit, this *divinum* adheres to the first organ to take shape in human ontogeny. In Aristotelian biology, this is the heart;<sup>28</sup> accordingly, the heart becomes the primary embodiment of the human form. In this, as in subsequent stages, Ḥayy’s spontaneously generated “embryonic” development follows the human norm precisely. However, Ibn Ṭufayl does not just use the concepts of Aristotle or Ibn Sīnā. Ibn Sīnā also displays his (as noted above) “practical Galenism” behind a front of Aristotelian loyalty in his embryology; only after the brain as well as the heart are formed

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*min al-Shifā’*, pp. 418:14–419:10), the oblique reference to proponents of man’s tellurian origin is omitted, as are all modal qualifications. Moreover, Ibn Sīnā’s “first progenitor of men” (*al-ab al-awwal li-l-nās*), which replaces Aristotle’s unassertive “men once...,” adumbrates Ibn Ṭufayl’s patterning of Ḥayy’s spontaneous generation on the creation of Adam.

<sup>22</sup>On Ibn Rushd’s view of spontaneous generation as something perfectly natural, cf. Genequand, *Ibn Rushd’s Metaphysics*, pp. 24–32.

<sup>23</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 101:9–104:5. See also Gauthier’s index, p. 170, s.v. “rūḥ.”

<sup>24</sup>*De generatione animalium*, 736b27–737a1, 9–10; cf. *De anima* 408b18–29, with David Ross’s commentary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), esp. pp. 18, 198–99.

<sup>25</sup>On Ibn Sīnā’s purely spiritual “giver of [material] forms” and Ibn Rushd’s criticism of this concept in the name of the material causation of material forms, see Genequand, *Ibn Rushd’s Metaphysics*, esp. pp. 27–28, 31; also Ibn Rushd, *Tafsīr mā ba’d al-ṭabī’a*, edited by Maurice Bouyges (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1938–52), II, 885:17–886:6. Implicitly, Ibn Rushd’s criticism also applies to Ibn Ṭufayl.

<sup>26</sup>*Sūrat al-Isrā’* (17), v. 85; cf. esp. *Sūrat al-Shūrā* (42), v. 52.

<sup>27</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 28:1–4, 121:6–8; cf. *ibid.*, p. 105:3–6.

<sup>28</sup>See, e.g., *De partibus animalium* III.3, 665a10–12; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De anima*, edited by Ivo Bruns in *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis praeter commentaria scripta minora, Supplementum Aristotelicum*, II.1 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1887), p. 95:6–12; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ḥayawān min al-Shifā’*, p. 401:9–11.

in the rational animal's embryo can the rational soul attach itself to both.<sup>29</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl dismisses this concession to medical learning in preference of an outlook that comes closest to al-Ghazālī; his language echoes the definition of the human essence in Book XXI, "The Wonders of the Heart," of *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Ibn Ṭufayl goes beyond al-Ghazālī as well as Ibn Sīnā in his assimilation of man to God by asserting the identity of God's and man's form (*ṣūra*). Al-Ghazālī, refraining from an elucidation of the "spirit" and the exact manner of its "adhesion" to the heart, had merely stressed the heart's powers of religious apprehension and cognition; Ibn Sīnā, on the other hand, had stipulated a similarity of essence between the separate substance and terrestrial life at its most rarefied.<sup>31</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl anchored his identification of man's as God's own "form" in prophetic tradition by quoting the *ḥadīth*: "And God created Adam in His image (*ṣūra*)."<sup>32</sup> In Neoplatonist fashion, though, "creation" is here interpreted as emanation.<sup>33</sup> Like light from the sun, God's spirit eternally emanates from Him into the world and shines back to Him according to the varying reflectivity of the receiving medium.<sup>34</sup> The soul of man is capable of receiving and mirroring the divine spiritual light to

<sup>29</sup> *Al-Ḥayawān min al-Shifā'*, p. 403:3-4.

<sup>30</sup> *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Būlāq: Dār al-ṭibā'a al-miṣrīya, AH 1269), III, 3:13-19, 28-29, 4:12-15; = Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791), *Ithāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn bi-sharḥ asrār Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Būlāq, n.d.), VII, in *margin*, esp. pp. 202, 203:37-40, 209:31-37). Cf. *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, edited and translated by Farid Jabre, 2nd edition (Beirut: Al-Lajna al-lubnāniya li-tarjamat al-rawā'i', 1969), p. 45:5-6 (text); = Richard Joseph McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment* (Boston: Twayne, 1980), pp. 101, 363-82. See also Louis Gardet, art. "Qalb" in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, IV, 486a-488a, esp. 487a-b.

<sup>31</sup> *De anima*, p. 261:15-16; cf. *Al-Ḥayawān min al-Shifā'*, p. 403:10-11.

<sup>32</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, p. 29:4-7. On the *ḥadīth* in question, see A.J. Wensinck, ed., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1936-88), II, 71a:20-21, with references to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), and Muslim (d. 261/875), for all of whom the ultimate authority is the Companion Abū Hurayra. It is almost superfluous to note that in the "orthodox" tradition, the pronoun in *ṣūratihī* is taken to refer to Adam.

<sup>33</sup> For Ibn Sīnā's usage of *fāḍa* and other terms derived from the same root, see, e.g., his *Tafsīr kitāb uthūlūjīyā min al-inṣāf*, edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī in his *Aristū 'inda l-'arab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-nahḍa al-miṣrīya, 1947), esp. pp. 40:16-41:5, 56:2-5, 67:6-14, etc.; cf. Amélie-Marie Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sina* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1938), pp. 290-93 nos. 544-52. Neoplatonist aspects of Ibn Sīnā's psychology are identified in Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 16-19, 20, 33, 57-58, 61-63, 87, 106-107, 108-109.

<sup>34</sup> For the Neoplatonic concept of light, see, for example, *Plotiniana arabica*, edited by Paul Henry and Hans Rudolf Schwyzer in *Plotini opera omnia* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, Bruxelles: L'Édition universelle, and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951-73), II, esp. pp. 367, 407, 411, 467. Ibn Ṭufayl does not clearly distinguish between translucence, reflection, and calefaction in his theory of receptivity of light. Consequently, for him the most "luminous" body is a polished mirror.



the extent of assuming its very form; when it takes on a certain concave shape, it focuses the reflected rays and makes them flare up in a fire that consumes everything it touches. Such, precisely, is the "form" of a prophet.<sup>35</sup>

While the Neoplatonist idea of emanation provided Ibn Ṭufayl with a conceptual frame that united Aristotelian psychology and the Qur'ānic doctrine of the creation of man, the fusion of the religious, including the Ṣūfī, tradition of Islam with that of Islamic Aristotelianism was also facilitated by their shared insistence on the function of the heart as the principal organ of man. In the system of *falsafa* as well as in Muslim religious thought, creation of the "sublunar world" was subject to a monarchic agent, whether it be called God's creator spirit or active intellect—or even vital spirit. Of necessity it was one and only one and admitted of multiplicity but at a secondary stage. In such fashion, Ibn Ṭufayl well-nigh identified the divine *rūḥ* with the Aristotelian vital—or animal—spirit whose seat and wellspring is the heart, not the brain. It is of little import that both al-Ghazālī and his follower Ibn Ṭufayl drew a distinction between the heart as a bodily organ with physiological functions on the one hand, and the homonymous spiritual essence of man on the other. In any case, Platonic triadic psychology and Galenic neurology had to cede to the Stagirite's authority, which, as we have seen, had been reinforced by religion in the meantime.<sup>36</sup> Late classical Aristotelianism had elaborated the concept of the unity of the soul versus Platonic partitive psychology on the basis of the individual's self-perception and bequeathed this achievement to Islam.<sup>37</sup> Yet regrettably, such philosophical progress was marred by the fact that it remained wedded to regressive medical notions about the human heart; Galen's neuroanatomy, the most advanced medical learning available, was not seriously taken into account, let alone carried to its logical conclusion as to the brain's primacy.<sup>38</sup>

In Ibn Ṭufayl's outline of ontogeny, which follows the account of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation, both the brain and the liver are thus relegated to subordinate positions with regard to the heart; they are secondary in the sequence of formation as well as in their subservience to the needs of the heart, even though, in their turn, they take precedence over the other parts

<sup>35</sup> Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, p. 29:7–10.

<sup>36</sup> For a particularly striking example of philosophical "monarchism," see al-Fārābī, *Al-Radd 'alā Jālīnūs*, esp. pp. 83pu–86:12.

<sup>37</sup> See Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, pp. 18, 64, 111–14.

<sup>38</sup> One study which is a particularly apt illumination of Galen's neuroanatomy may be singled out for mention here: Joseph Walsh, "Galen's Discovery and Promulgation of the Function of the Recurrent Laryngeal Nerve," *Annals of Medical History*, 8 (1926), pp. 176–84.

of the body and participate in its governance.<sup>39</sup> The function of the brain is limited to furnishing sensory perceptions and to elaborating a spirit finer than the vital spirit of the heart, just as the function of the liver is to provide nutrition for the body, the hepatic spirit being coarser than that of the heart. Such gradations in fineness do not, however, invalidate the identity of the aerial body which dwells in the three organs and is equated with the vital spirit. It is this spirit that the brain receives from the heart and, by way of the nerves, conveys to the rest of the body, providing sensation and locomotion.<sup>40</sup>

By acknowledging the existence of nerves and their origin in the brain, Ibn Ṭufayl obviously does not revert to Aristotle's primitive physiology, in which the brain was restricted to the function of a refrigerant.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, he severely distorts Galenic physiology; while assigning the nutritive faculty its customary seat in the liver and the vital force its equally habitual residence in the heart, he deprives man's rational faculty of its organic substrate by suppressing most cerebral functions.<sup>42</sup> Thus, excepting reason, Ibn Ṭufayl has the entire organism at the service of the vital spirit.

Ibn Ṭufayl's entirely non-medical perspective in his outline of anthropology can profitably be contrasted with that of Islamic Galenism; the solid tradition of medical scholarship on which Andalusia could pride herself by Ibn Ṭufayl's time provides us with a competent witness: Abū l-Qāsim al-Zahrāwī (d. ca. 400/1009).<sup>43</sup> In customary fashion, he enumerates the four principal organs of the human body usually recognized in Islamic medical

<sup>39</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 29:12–31:7, 32:3–8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52:6–10. In the lines immediately preceding this passage, Ibn Ṭufayl enumerates those parts of the body which the animal spirit uses as implements in the same way as a hunter would his weapons; is it only by oversight that he omits the brain, but not the liver? A little later (*ibid.*, p. 56:14), Ḥayy determines that all parts of the body are like tools in relation to the animal spirit.

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., *De partibus animalium* II.7, 652b16–653a26; II.10, 656a15–27. Cf. *De sensu et sensato*, 438b25–30, 444a8–15; *De somno et vigilia*, 456a6–8; *Parva naturalia*, edited by David Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), esp. pp. 55–56, 194, 300; also al-Fārābī, *Al-Radd 'alā Jālīnūs*, esp. pp. 95pu–105:2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Sīnā's exposition of the perceptive faculties of the soul and their locations in the brain (*Qānūn*, I, 71–72) provides an instructive contrast to Ibn Ṭufayl's casual treatment of the subject; although the doctrine of the transcendent origin of the human intellect puts similar constraints on both authors, Ibn Sīnā still gives a coherent account of brain functions at the physiological level. The difference of literary genre notwithstanding, Ibn Ṭufayl's failure to do so in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* would seem to beg further explanation.

<sup>43</sup> For a comprehensive biographical account of al-Zahrāwī, see Sami Khalaf Hamarneh and Glenn Sonnedeker, *A Pharmaceutical View of Abulcasis al-Zahrawi in Moorish Spain* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963; *Janus*, Suppl. V), esp. pp. 14–22; cf. M.S. Spink and Geoffrey Lewis, *Albucasis On Surgery and Instruments* (London: Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, 1973), pp. i–ii.

literature—the brain, heart, liver, and testes—and supports his ordering by these organs' relative indispensability for the individual's survival; for al-Zahrāwī, brain injuries alone lead to instant death.<sup>44</sup> While the intrinsic merit of this assertion has no bearing on the present argument, al-Zahrāwī's testimony suffices to highlight once more Ibn Ṭufayl's distance from medicine proper in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. As regards the Galenic tetrad of organs, he not only gives short shrift to the human brain but neglects to mention the testes altogether; by not accounting for the organism's reproductive faculty, Ibn Ṭufayl indicates that his concern with human anatomy and physiology is not that of a naturalist or a physician. More will have to be said about his selective acknowledgment of man's natural—or, if one will, animal—existence.

Within the narrative structure of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, the account of the protagonist's spontaneous generation serves a variety of functions, most of which are outside the purview of this study. Purporting merely to relate what had been transmitted on the authority of "pious ancestors" (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), but in fact using the greater freedom afforded by this matrix as compared with the alternative tradition of Ḥayy's human descent, Ibn Ṭufayl sets forth his own anthropology and, as observed before, especially stresses, in "scientific" fashion, the likeness of man and God.<sup>45</sup> In this way, the author provides a frame of reference for Ḥayy's discovery of himself and the world, and at the same time, supplies the reader with those details of his origin that Ḥayy will never be able to know. Yet, a preestablished harmony obtains between Ḥayy's knowledge and knowledge as such, i.e. as defined by the author. The narrator, and through him, his readers, may know more than Ḥayy, but the difference is one of quantity and involves minor details only.

Evidently, one of Ibn Ṭufayl's purposes in writing *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* was to assert precisely that congruence and essential identity of the knowledge native human reason could acquire unaided and of the learning accessible through instruction in the author's own age. One of the questions directly

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<sup>44</sup> *Al-Taṣrīf li-man 'ajaza 'an al-ta'līf*, facsimile edition by Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1986), I, 7:15–19. It goes without saying that al-Zahrāwī's list of four leading organs does no more than represent received medical knowledge; cf., e.g., 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. ca. 250/864), *Firdaws al-ḥikma*, edited by Muḥammad Zubayr al-Ṣiddīqī (Berlin: "Sonne," 1928), pp. 43:9–45:4, 82:21–83:5; Ibn Sīnā, *Qānūn*, I, 21:24–30; also Friedemann Rex, *Zur Theorie der Naturprozesse in der früh-arabischen Wissenschaft* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1975; Collection des travaux de l'Académie internationale d'histoire des sciences, 22), p. 99.

<sup>45</sup> Not quite the likeness of man and God, but certainly Ḥayy's immediate and intimate relation to his divine creator is also emphasized in the account of Ḥayy's human birth, nursing, and exposure. Again drawing on the Qur'ān, Ibn Ṭufayl raises Ḥayy to the rank of Adam as representing all mankind; see Goodman, *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 105, 188–89.

bearing on this premise, and also one of the crucial problems of Islamic psychology, was that of the self and the organic substrate—if any—of its self-consciousness; like his predecessors, Ibn Ṭufayl linked the issue with that of the most vitally important organ. In the context of Ḥayy's ontogeny, we saw him formulate his solution in terms most clearly recalling Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī; at the "biological" level, the heart, being the body's first and foremost organ, houses the "animal spirit;" at the metaphysical level, a sensibly and intellectually well-nigh indissoluble bond unites this spirit and the *rūḥ* that perpetually emanates from God.

In order for Ḥayy to arrive at the same conclusion, the narrator has him perform a thought experiment derived from Ibn Sīnā's famous example of the "flying man."<sup>46</sup> Hypothetically eliminating, one after the other, different parts of his body, including his head, Ḥayy finally settles on the heart as the one truly vital organ.<sup>47</sup> Further on this assumption leads Ḥayy to discover, by "actual" anatomical experimentation, the animal spirit lodged in the heart.<sup>48</sup> Even though the argument of location for the central function of the heart can be traced back, via Alexander of Aphrodisias, to Aristotle himself, Ḥayy's reasoning most clearly betrays his author's dependence on al-Ghazālī.<sup>49</sup> Contrary to Ibn Sīnā's "flying man" experiment, both insist on sensory perception and awareness of corporal existence as constitutive of self-consciousness. Yet while al-Ghazālī establishes the heart's vital function by opposing it to a mere extremity, Ibn Ṭufayl expressly denies such a function to the head as well.

In order to throw into relief Ibn Ṭufayl's view of the respective position of brain and heart, it may help to contrast it with Ibn Sīnā's and al-Ghazālī's formulations in the passages just referred to. In his assertion of the apriority of self-consciousness and the a posteriori nature of the perception of one's body, Ibn Sīnā insists on the inability of reason to intellectualize even its so-called instruments, "the heart or the brain."<sup>50</sup> However,

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, edited by Jacques Forget (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892), I, 120:2–5; translated by Amélie-Marie Goichon as *Livre des directives* (Beirut: Commission pour la traduction des chefs-d'oeuvre, and Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1951), p. 308 (cf. pp. 303–304, with notes); *idem*, *De anima*, pp. 16:3–11, 255:6–256:9. Cf. the Introduction by Gerard Verbeke in Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de anima*, edited by Simone van Riet, II (Louvain: Éditions orientalistes, and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p. 37\* and n. 127.

<sup>47</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 40:7–12.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50:1–8.

<sup>49</sup> See Aristotle, e.g., *De somno et vigilia*, 456a2–3; *De iuventute et senectute*, 469a23–27; *De partibus animalium* III.3, 665a10–13; Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De anima*, pp. 95:12–26, 98:7–12; al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, edited by Maurice Bouyges and Majid Fakhri (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1962), pp. 219:11–220:15.

<sup>50</sup> *De anima*, pp. 16:7–8, 13–14, 256:2–5, 256:13–257:1; *Ishārāt*, p. 120:3–5 (cf. Goichon, *Livre des directives*, p. 308).

notwithstanding all his Fārābīan preference for Aristotle over Galen and his tendency to harmonize evident contradictions, Ibn Sīnā, as noted above, is too deeply rooted in the Galenic tradition of medicine not to relate the proportional size of the human brain to its cognitive functions.<sup>51</sup> In the context of the section here quoted, he significantly, if irresolutely, adheres to the alternative of “heart or brain.”

Al-Ghazālī also displays his familiarity with Galenic anatomy, but he conveniently ignores it when it suits his argument. The alternative formulation “heart or brain” occurs throughout in his summary of “the philosophers’” arguments for the incorporeality of the human intellect and for the apriority of its self-consciousness.<sup>52</sup> In his refutation, which stresses the self’s a priori awareness of its body, al-Ghazālī adopts highly specialized anatomical terms when describing this awareness as devoid of any technical knowledge of anatomy, although extending to faculties such as sensory perceptions.<sup>53</sup> He then proceeds to draw a parallel between man’s innate awareness of his body and the consciousness of his soul and identity; man realizes that a more intimate bond ties his identity to heart and chest than to his leg, and that he is able to envisage his existence without the latter, but not without the former.<sup>54</sup> Thus, al-Ghazālī suddenly (and somewhat disingenuously) ignores all Galenic concepts and falls back on popular anatomical notions that neglect the brain altogether; on the other hand, he does not explicitly deny the head vital functions either.

Given al-Ghazālī’s theological motivation, his disregard for Galenic anatomy on a point of potential conflict with the teaching of the Qur’ān may not come as a complete surprise.<sup>55</sup> Rather more remarkably, Ibn Ṭufayl, a professional physician, carried al-Ghazālī’s argument to an extreme by including the head among the dispensable parts of the body; he thus reverts to a position akin to that of Alexander of Aphrodisias who had, without exception, located all vital and mental faculties in the heart.<sup>56</sup> Largely suppressing his medical knowledge in the philosophical context of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, Ibn Ṭufayl does not even adopt Ibn Sīnā’s compromise position of a moderately Galenized Aristotelianism, let alone follow Platonic tripartite psychology or uphold Galen’s neuroanatomy. That it was indeed a suppression of knowledge and not mere ignorance might be gathered from the

<sup>51</sup> *Al-Ḥayawān min al-shifā’*, p. 226:5–6; cf. *ibid.*, p. 40:3, etc.

<sup>52</sup> *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, pp. 218:12, 219:12, 15–16; *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, edited by Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1961), pp. 363pu, 367:–5.

<sup>53</sup> *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, p. 220:2–4, 7–9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220:12–14.

<sup>55</sup> *Qalb* is a Qur’ānic term, which does not hold true for either *dimāgh* or *‘aql*. Admittedly, in *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, III, 4:12–15, he does not seem to be troubled by the different provenance of *qalb* and *‘aql*.

<sup>56</sup> *De anima*, pp. 94:7–100ult.

narrator's choice of the somewhat distancing term *ẓanna* ("to presume") in noting Ḥayy's inference of the head's dispensability for the organism;<sup>57</sup> yet if this be construed as a reservation about the protagonist's reasoning on the author's part, in terms of the book as a whole it nonetheless remains totally inconsequential.

In sum, Ḥayy's discovery of the heart as animal life's most vital organ and his unawareness of the brain's nervous faculties illustrates the congruence that Ibn Ṭufayl had predicated between contemporary learning and Ḥayy's acquired knowledge. Within the narrative, Ḥayy's anatomical interest is convincingly actuated by his foster mother's death and rigor mortis; therefore, without considering the antecedents of the "flying man" experiment in Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazālī, and given Ḥayy's isolation from other human beings, one might be tempted to find it only plausible for him not to discover the brain's function, but instead, to rely on the experience of his own variable heartbeat. In fact, though, Ibn Ṭufayl's line of argument demanded that he set Ḥayy's "experiments" up in such a way as to "prove" what he himself had already mapped out; Ḥayy would have satisfied himself of the indispensability of the brain for human thought if his author had done so previously, and consequently intended for him to do so as well.

Leaving aside Ibn Ṭufayl's reliance on al-Ghazālī, which convincingly explains his deviations from Galenism, the possibility that Ibn Ṭufayl had direct knowledge of al-Fārābī's critique of Galen can safely be ruled out; al-Fārābī polemicized against what he considered Galen's cheap invective against Aristotle and the lack of logical conclusiveness of Galen's anatomical experiments. For one, Ibn Ṭufayl's appeal to individual experience and insistence on Ḥayy's consciousness of his own heartbeat in his attempted proof of the heart's primacy would have drawn al-Fārābī's criticism just as much as had Galen's reliance on everyday figures of speech in his argument for the brain as the seat of reason.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Ibn Ṭufayl, who permits his hero to discover the existence of nerves and their origin in the brain, relies on Galen's experiment of blocking nerves in order to prove their function as transmitters of sensory and motor impulses. On logical grounds, al-Fārābī had undertaken to refute Galen on this point.

### *Anatomy, Sexuality, and the Heptadic Scheme*

Ḥayy's presumed anatomical experiments in search of the vital force that had unaccountably departed from his foster mother provide another, particularly striking illustration of Ibn Ṭufayl's departure from Galenic precepts

<sup>57</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 40:19–20.

<sup>58</sup> See the passages from al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-khiṭāba* cited in n. 14 above, and in Zimmermann, "Al-Fārābī und die philosophische Kritik an Galen," esp. pp. 404–405.

and of the preestablished harmony obtaining between Ḥayy's "scientific discoveries" and his author's thinking. While performing an autopsy in order to determine the nature of the gazelle's injury, he discovers that the left ventricle of her heart is empty and in good Hellenistic—pneumatic—fashion concludes that the void had been left by the departed principle of life.<sup>59</sup> As is well known, it was Galen who finally proved that in the living organism, the arteries and consequently also the left ventricle of the heart are filled with blood, just like the right ventricle and the veins. However, Ibn Ṭufayl has the hero in his doubly fictitious vivisections encounter only hot smoke-like air resembling white fog in the left ventricle.<sup>60</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl's disregard for biological data has been asserted and proven, it is hoped, at various instances in the foregoing; one striking example that still begs examination is his self-consciously allusive treatment—well-nigh amounting to concealment—of Ḥayy's sexuality. Ḥayy's adult rejection of this side of human existence is adumbrated by his childhood discomfort at his own nude body. At the age of seven, Ḥayy's perception of what to him are deficiencies of his own natural properties quickens his sense of being different from the wild animals in whose company he lives. He feels inferior, and exposed to them not least because their coat of fur or plumage masks their organs of excretion, whereas his own private parts are fully uncovered. Hence it is primarily a sense of shame that makes him cover his nakedness, not the quest for protection against the cold or the animals' aggression.<sup>61</sup>

The next stage of the hero's growing up that might have called for comment by the author was Ḥayy's adolescence; instead, Ibn Ṭufayl simply suppressed the fact of puberty. In order to do so more elegantly, he went so far as to modify, in a most idiosyncratic fashion, the septenary pattern that

<sup>59</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*, p. 44:6–9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50:3–8. In *De usu partium*, edited by Georg Helmreich (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1907), I, 358, Galen describes the result of a corresponding experiment. In Margaret Tallmadge May's translation the passage reads: "When the thorax is opened, both ventricles of the heart are observed to pulsate, but they do not both contain blood and pneuma in the same proportion; for in the right ventricle the substance of the blood strongly predominates, and in the left ventricle the pneuma;" see her *Galen on the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968), I, 321. In spite of this ambiguous and, as it were, wavering formulation, Galen did not in the least doubt the fact of arterial blood flow; cf. *ibid.*, I, 47–48; II, 758a:8–11; and Galen, *An in arteriis natura sanguis contineatur*, esp. Chap. VI, in *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, edited by C.G. Kühn (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1821–33), IV, 724. Notwithstanding Ibn Ṭufayl's divergence from the standard medical teaching of his time, the passages quoted here from *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān* and Galen sharply illuminate the opposition of Galen and medieval Galenism.

<sup>61</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*, pp. 34:12–36:2, 37:1–2. The preceding comments are not meant to suggest that avoidance of nudity necessarily implies a negative attitude towards sexuality.

he superimposed on Ḥayy's development.<sup>62</sup> Admittedly, by combining the second and third heptads into one phase, Ibn Ṭufayl may have done little more than echo a commonplace of venerable age; however, a comparison of his formulation with a similar passage in Aristotle's *Politics* illustrates the different turn the commonplace, if indeed it was one, took in Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>63</sup> Aristotle grouped the two periods from seven to puberty and from puberty to 21 together as the time of life to be given over to learning, yet he expressly spoke of two ages and named puberty as the dividing line between them.

Only after completing the fifth heptad, that is, after the age of 35, when realizing his own position between animal corporeality, the spirituality of the celestial beings, and communion with his divine creator, is Ḥayy allowed the brief admission that insofar as he partakes of animal nature, he is also possessed of a sexual urge.<sup>64</sup> Given the ideological constraints that limited Ibn Ṭufayl's freedom of expression on the one hand and the transparently ascetic tendency of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* on the other, the subject of human sexuality could not but be a cause of embarrassment for the author.<sup>65</sup> Passing over it altogether in silence may have been impossible; but by allowing his bare acknowledgment of it to fall into a void, as it were, he tried to minimize its import. Furthermore, staying within the horizon of the narrative, Ḥayy's isolated existence makes procreation of the species obsolete. Thus, even at the biological level, sexuality has become functionless. Yet Ḥayy accepts procreation as part of the natural order of life around him, and in his veneration for the Creator's wisdom, attempts to disturb as little as possible the cycle of growth and reproduction of those plant and animal species upon which he must prey for his own survival. Minimal interference with life around him is the overriding principle in his selection of food; thus, Ḥayy's first choice are ripe fleshy fruits, such as apples, plums, and pears, because their seeds are already fit for germination and so ensure the continuation of the species. On the other hand, if he avails himself of nuts or chestnuts, which are of a much higher nutri-

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36:2–53:1 (cf. 56:2–3). The only passing reference to adolescence during these fourteen years is “meanwhile he had grown taller (*tara'ra'a*) and passed beyond the age of seven” (*ibid.*, 37:3–4). The ambiguity of the statement again appears designed to exclude puberty from the time covered; cf. Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311), *Lisān al-'arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1374–76/1955–56), VIII, 128b:20–129a:5.

<sup>63</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, IV, 17:14–15, 1336b:35–40.

<sup>64</sup> Strictly speaking, Ḥayy does not consider his body to form part of his self; hence it is not his self, but rather “his base part” (*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, 106:6–9), that demands sensual fulfillment. For Ḥayy's ascetic regimen, see esp. *ibid.*, 109:5–112:10.

<sup>65</sup> For Muslim views of sexuality, see al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Books XII (on marriage) and XXIII (on concupiscence). Cf. Georges Henri Bousquet, *La morale de l'Islam et son éthique sexuelle* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve 1953); Madelain Farah, *Marriage and Sexuality in Islam: a Translation of al-Ghazālī's Book on the Etiquette of Marriage* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984).



tional value, he deprives the parent plants of their means of propagation. Here again, Ibn Ṭufayl subordinates medical knowledge—in this case, of dietetics—to ulterior philosophical purposes, even though these would also have been served by the ingestion of rather more nourishing food, but at longer intervals.<sup>66</sup>

In spite of Ḥayy's reverential attitude toward creation and his acceptance of being likewise created in corporeal form, he considers his mortal frame as base and only fit to be subjected to a strict and ascetic dietary regimen. *A fortiori*, it can be assumed that this regimen is also meant to subdue his sexuality, even though this is not openly stated.

It need hardly be stressed that in the Islamic tradition of humoral physiology, such a denial—or seeming denial—of the biological fact of sexuality is well-nigh unthinkable.<sup>67</sup> Although Ibn Ṭufayl, through Ḥayy, acknowledges the beautiful and wise disposition of created life, he is much closer in spirit to the ascetic tendencies of Neoplatonism.<sup>68</sup>

Discussion of Ibn Ṭufayl's adaptation of a heptadic scheme for defining the stages of human life may profitably be related to the tradition of the septennial division of the ages of man. After Solon formulated it in his famous elegy, this system remained—modified, contested, or upheld—as a topic of discussion in various traditions of Greek and Greek-influenced Latin thought.<sup>69</sup> According to this scheme, human life regularly consists of ten septennia. The first ends with the appearance of the permanent teeth, the second with puberty, the third with the growth of a beard; during the fourth septennium, man reaches the peak of his strength, during the fifth he is supposed to marry and beget children. Following the sixth term,

<sup>66</sup>On the nutritive properties of the plants mentioned, see, e.g., Ibn Sīnā, *Qānūn*, I, 258, 277, 280, 283, 348, 445, s.vv. *ijjās*, *ballūt* (includes *shāhballūt*), *jawz*, *jillawz*, *kummathrā*, *tuffāh*; Ibn al-Bayṭār, *Al-Jāmi' li-mufradāt al-adwiya wa-l-aghdhīya* (Būlāq, AH 1291), I, 13:12–14:20, 110:20–111:25, 138:3–139:19, 173:20–175:11; IV, 77:7–78:31, s.vv. *ijjās*, *ballūt*, *tuffāh*, *jawz*, *kummathrā*.

<sup>67</sup>See, for example, the discussion of the several functions of intercourse in Ibn Sīnā, *Qānūn*, II, 534–35.

<sup>68</sup>Note, e.g., the characteristically loaded description of the body as “dark” and “coarse” (*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 106:8: *al-badan al-muẓlim al-kathīf*). Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Tafsīr kitāb uthulūjīyā*, esp. pp. 41:9–42:6, 66:8–11; *Plotiniana arabica*, esp. pp. 381–83, 403.

<sup>69</sup>For a detailed discussion see Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher, *Die Hebdomadenlehre der griechischen Philosophen und Ärzte*, in *Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Cl., 24.6 (1906); cf. also Franz Boll, “Die Lebensalter. Ein Beitrag zur antiken Ethologie und zur Geschichte der Zahlen, mit einem Anhang ‘Zur Schrift *Peri hebdomádōn*,’ *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur*, 31 (1913), pp. 89–146. For Solon's elegy, commonly included in editions of Greek lyrical poetry, see, for example, Theodor Bergk and Johannes Rubenbauer, eds., *Poetae lyriici graeci*, II: *Poetae elegiaci* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1915), pp. 51–52 no. 27 (with *testimonia*).

which witnesses a further refinement of his mind, his reasoning powers reach their peak during the seventh and eighth heptads. The high plane of his mental development is thus supposed to extend for fourteen years until the completion of the 56th year; the midterm of this phase, age 49, which could be taken to be the acme of the mind's life, is not expressly noted. The following final two heptads see the slowly beginning and then ever faster decline of physical and mental strength, until the completion of 70 years marks the term of reasonable life-expectancy.

This rather rigid pattern is modified by the unknown author of one of the most influential texts in the heptadist tradition, the pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *De septimanis*.<sup>70</sup> He retains the septennial stages, but groups them so that he arrives at an overall heptad of ages. Infancy, boyhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, each lasting seven years, complete the body's development. Full manhood lasts three heptads; thus 49 marks the critical transition to the stage of senior, which ends after the eighth heptad; following that, the duration of old age would normally be a bi-septennium.<sup>71</sup>

Even outside the tradition of comprehensive heptadist thought as represented by *De septimanis*, certain critical, or, to introduce another frequently used term, "climacterial" transitions from one stage of life to another were pegged at ages that fit a scheme of multiples of seven.<sup>72</sup> Aristotle, on whose witness we have already called, accepted septennial divisions as evident for childhood and adolescence; he asserted that although puberty sets in at fourteen, the sperm attains its full generative force only after a further seven years. Express references to heptadists occur both in the passage from *Politics*, cited above, and in another one closely preceding it, in which Aristotle fixed the peak of the activity of reason at "about" the age of 50;<sup>73</sup> however, his formulation shows that at times the number 49 was integrated into a decadic system by making it a round 50.

From the period after Aristotle, much of the ample heptadist material extant in Greek or traceable to Greek works is to be found in Aristotelian

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<sup>70</sup>In addition to Boll, "Lebensalter," see Christian Harder, "Zur pseudohippokratischen Schrift *Peri hebdomádōn*," *Rheinisches Museum*, 48 (1893), pp. 433–47; Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher, *Die hippokratische Schrift von der Siebenzahl in ihrer vierfachen Überlieferung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1913), esp. pp. 9–10, 136; *Pseudogaleni in Hippocratis de septimanis commentarium*, edited and translated by Gotthelf Bergsträsser (Leipzig and Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1914; *Corpus medicorum graecorum*, XI.2.1).

<sup>71</sup>Pseudo-Hippocrates in Philo, as quoted by Roscher, *Hebdomadenlehre*, p. 48 n. 83; this passage is not extant in the Greek text of *De septimanis* (Roscher, "Siebenzahl," p. 136), nor in the Arabic version of pseudo-Galen's commentary (Bergsträsser, pp. 56:22, 60:15).

<sup>72</sup>See, e.g., Censorinus, *De die natali*, quoted by Roscher, *Hebdomadenlehre*, p. 167.

<sup>73</sup>*Politics* IV.16.16–17, 1335b:32–35.

and Platonic commentaries, and in all likelihood it was by this route that heptadist anthropology was transmitted to Islam. Whether or not it was within this particular frame of reference, Aristotle's quoted statement on the different ages of corporal and mental acme provided Islamic thinkers with an often-rehearsed argument for the separate substantiality of the soul, since they took it to imply the immunity of man's intellectual faculty to corporal change, or more precisely, decay.<sup>74</sup>

Notwithstanding the variegated fabric of Islamic Aristotelianism, Ibn Ṭufayl's designation of 50 as the age of supreme attainment in Ḥayy's spiritual progress may be related to an even more obvious antecedent in Aristotle's works than the aforementioned sections from *Politics*. In the *Rhetoric*, and in correct heptadist fashion, Aristotle noted that the soul's acme occurs at 49, while the body reaches the peak of its development at age 30 and retains its full strength for five years.<sup>75</sup> Due to a translator's misunderstanding of Aristotle's "50 wanting one," the Arabic here reads "the soul's increase in *what it wants* continues until 50," in effect obscuring the heptadic pattern of the passage for subsequent Islamic authors.<sup>76</sup> Hence, if some measure of exaggeration be permitted, Ibn Ṭufayl could not but break the septenary mold of Ḥayy's development at the cardinal moment.

To return to the medical tradition, the transmission of the aforementioned pseudo-Hippocratic *De septimanis*, as yet only briefly referred to, might bear closer examination. Although this text has repeatedly been named as a prominent source of Islamic heptadology, its commentary by an unknown author—which circulated spuriously under Galen's name—does not, in contrast to Galen's genuine commentaries on Hippocratic writings, contain the integral text of the original, but rather only brief fragments. The crucial section on the divisions of human life is almost completely omitted. Thus, the Arabic translation of the pseudo-Galenic text, which in all likelihood is owed to Yaḥyā ibn al-Biṭrīq (d. ca. 200/815), cannot be considered in tracing the transmission of the pseudo-Hippocratic heptadic anthropology to Islam. That it did eventually find its way into Arabic medical literature is proven by the Andalusian author 'Arīb ibn Sa'd al-Qurṭubī

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., al-Ghazālī, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, pp. 363:19–364:1; *idem*, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, pp. 221:15–17, 222:–4–223:11. Cf. Ibn Rushd, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, edited by F. Stuart Crawford (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1953; *Corpus commentariorum Averrois in Aristotelem versionum latinarum*, VI.1), pp. 87–88 (I.65, ad 408b18–24).

<sup>75</sup> *Rhetoric* II.14, 1390b:9–11.

<sup>76</sup> *Aristotelis Rhetorica in versione [sic] Arabica vetusta*, edited by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Cairo: Maktabat al-nahḍa al-misrīya, 1959), pp. 126ult–127:2; Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīṣ al-khiṭāba*, edited by Muḥammad Salīm Sālim (Cairo: Lajnat ihyā' al-turāth al-islāmī, 1387/1967), p. 429:7 and n. 1, referring to Ibn Sīnā's *Khiṭāba*.

(fl. mid-4th/10th c.); in his pediatric treatise *Khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-l-mawlūdīn*, which he dedicated to the caliph al-Ḥakam II during the latter's reign (i.e. between 351/961 and 366/976), he quotes a presumed *ḥadīth* of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib enumerating the first four septennia until the completion of man's physical and mental development.<sup>77</sup>

In contrast to *De septimanis* and the philosophical tradition of later antiquity, a quaternary scheme based on an analogy between human life and the four seasons appears to have been dominant in medical thought from Hippocrates onward; Galen, who fixed the acme at age 35, is also a representative of this tradition.<sup>78</sup> Through his influence, it was passed on to and commonly adopted by Islamic Galenism.<sup>79</sup>

It has become clear that in his septennial division of Ḥayy's life, as in the other points discussed before, Ibn Ṭufayl deviates from the main body of the medical tradition. As concerns his hero's suppressed adolescence, we have seen how he quite consciously adapted the transmitted model to his own purposes. When surveying Ḥayy's life between the ages of 21 and 49 a heptadic pattern is immediately apparent; during his fourth and fifth septennia, Ḥayy sets his mind on what might for the sake of convenience be called metaphysics. By the age of 28 he has grasped the principles of the sublunar world of generation and corruption; for the next seven years, he immerses himself in the secrets of the celestial spheres, and finally, by dint of the sheer force of reason, conceives of an all-wise Creator of the universe. After this preparation, it seems only fitting that the following bi-septennium, which for Aristotle spanned the time between the body's and the soul's acme, sees Ḥayy's ascent from a merely intellectual concept of the divine to the supremely ineffable communion with God. The narrator of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* not being concerned with "physics" or medicine in their own right, it is no more than appropriate for him to dismiss the heptadic

<sup>77</sup>'Arīb ibn Sa'd al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-l-mawlūdīn*, edited by Henri Jahier and Nouredine Abdelkader (Algiers: Librairie Ferraris, 1375/1956), p. 84:14–17. To date, it has not been possible to identify 'Arīb's source for this *ḥadīth* of 'Alī, a *Kitāb al-khiṣāl* by 'Isā ibn Mūsā.

<sup>78</sup>Kühn, XVIIIB, 643; cf. *ibid.*, XVI, 102, 345, 424; XIX, 373.

<sup>79</sup>See, e.g., 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī, *Firdaws al-ḥikma*, pp. 55:18–56:8, 83:13–17; 'Arīb ibn Sa'd al-Qurṭubī, *Khalq al-janīn*, p. 85:8–20; Ibn Sīnā, *Qānūn*, I, 11:3–9. Perfunctorily, and clearly not based on detailed information, al-Ṭabarī also mentions the variant (pseudo-) Hippocratic division of life into heptads and its derivation from the number of planets (*Firdaws al-ḥikma*, p. 71:15–18). 'Arīb also recounts an alternative astrological division of life into seven ages of various length; beginning with the moon and in ascending order, each of the seven "planets" governs one period. While these obviously do not conform to a strictly septennial or bi-septennial sequence, it is worth noting that the years of transition hover, as it were, around heptadically marked stages (*Khalq al-janīn*, pp. 85:22–87:19). For ancient antecedents of such schemes, see Roscher, *Hebdomadenlehre*, p. 172.

scheme at this point; its completion would but have weakened the point of his tale.

As suggested by the title, and spelled out at the beginning of this study of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, one of its premises has been to understand Ibn Ṭufayl's disregard for medical and biological learning in terms of his metaphysical preoccupation, not, however, to attribute it to inadequacy. In all frankness, it has been hard to remain consistently true to this double premise and, at times, to avoid the notion of plain ignorance on his part. In order to remove lingering doubts about Ibn Ṭufayl's medical competence, what is called for is a thorough analysis of his *Al-Urjūza al-ṭawīla fī l-ṭibb*.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “SYMBOLS AND HINTS:” SOME CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE MEANING OF IBN ṬUFAYL’S *ḤAYY IBN YAQẒĀN*

J. Christoph Bürgel

(Universität Bern)

The text of concern to us during this colloquium is usually called a “philosophical novel.” This label is not altogether wrong. Still, all of us are aware that the term “novel” is modern and that the adjective “philosophical” is debatable and would perhaps not have entirely satisfied the author, since his intention was obviously to discuss matters that transcend philosophy, that cannot be grasped by reason and logical argumentation. In fact, according to what Ibn Ṭufayl states in his prologue, the things he wants to deal with in this text cannot even properly be expressed in words. This language problem, the issue of ineffability when confronted with the experiences Ḥayy’s friend wants him to discuss, is addressed at the very beginning of the book and then touched upon time and again in the prologue and later on in the text.

The kind of visions Ibn Ṭufayl confesses to have attained “has reached a degree so extraordinary that no tongue can describe and no explanation expound it, since it belongs to another category and to another realm than theirs.”<sup>1</sup> Later on, he states that his friend’s demand must aim at one of two possible objects:

You may ask me [to tell you] what the people of vision and direct mystical experience (*dhawq*) and divine presence behold in the way of mystical saintship (*wilāya*). This cannot be adequately expounded in a book. And if one tries to do so and takes the pains of talking or writing about it in books, then its essence

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, edited by Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), p. 4.

changes (or: becomes inaccessible, *istahālat*) and shifts to the other order, the speculative one. For if it is clothed in letters and sounds and brought near to the visible world, it does not in any way remain what it was.<sup>2</sup>

The other object his friend may have had in mind must then have been to instruct him about this matter in the way of the speculative thinkers (*ahl al-naẓar*):

This can be set down in books and mastered by means of expressions. However, it is rarer than red sulphur, particularly in the region where we live. For it is so extraordinary that only some individuals grasp a slight portion of it here and there. And whoever has grasped something of it does not talk about it except in symbols (*ramzan*). For the community of pristine religion (*al-ḥanīfiyya*) and the genuine Sacred Law forbid one to delve into it and warn against this.<sup>3</sup>

The word *ramz* reappears soon afterward in the paragraph on al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), of whom our author states:

Most of his [teaching] is *ramz* ("symbol") and *ishāra* ("hint"). So no one will profit from it save those who have perceived it with the insight of their souls, or heard it from him [personally], or have been prepared to comprehend it by virtue of an outstanding inborn capacity (*fiṭra*) for which the slightest hint (*ishāra*) suffices.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl does not expressly say in the prologue whether or not he himself is going to use this kind of language in his text, even though it follows almost logically from the statement about the two possibilities that his way of speaking will be that of *ramz* and *ishāra*. He uses the term *ishāra* again in a later section of his book, when his hero has attained the highest degree of knowledge and has passed from logical conclusion to mystical vision. Before beginning to speak of these experiences, Ibn Ṭufayl makes the following reservations:

Whoever intends to express this state intends something impossible and is in the situation of one wishing to taste the colors as colors and claiming, for example, that black should be sweet or

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

sour. Nevertheless, we will not withhold from you some hints by which we shall insinuate (*ishārāt nūmi'u bihā*) the marvels of that station which he beheld in his visions, in the way of a parabolical language (*'alā sabīl ḍarb al-mithāl*), not by knocking at the door of reality, for it is not possible to realize what this station implies except by attaining it.

Ibn Ṭufayl then exhorts his friend to listen to his indications with the ear of his heart and to comprehend them with the gaze of his reason, and not to demand any further oral explanations, for "the room [for speech] is narrow and to express in words what is not apt to be expressed is dangerous!"<sup>5</sup>

Again, in a subsequent section, having described the chain of celestial beings pervading the universe and connecting the divine reality with the earth as a system of mirrors,<sup>6</sup> each of which receives the light of the sun and reflects it to the next mirror, Ibn Ṭufayl suspects a misunderstanding of this description on the part of his friend and reproaches him:

Have I not already told you that the room for speech is narrow here, and that the expressions are all imagination and not reality! What you imagined made you commit the error of identifying the image (*al-mithāl*) with what it represents (*al-mumaththal bihi*) in all its particulars. This, however, must not even be done in the case of normal discourse. How then in this case?!<sup>7</sup>

Once again, the problem of language and its relation to reality is discussed in connection with Ḥayy's experience in the country of Salāmān and Absāl and his encounter with their religion. The author begins this section by stating that this religion was "one of the true religions taken from one of the previous prophets—God's blessings be upon them," and that it "spoke of all the real beings (or: the existent realities) by means of parables (*al-amthila al-madrūba*) that convey the imaginative representations (*khiyālāt*) of those things and install their contours (*rusūm*) in the souls [of men], as was the custom in addressing the general public."<sup>8</sup> This statement contains a clear criticism of the religion to which Ibn Ṭufayl himself belonged, yet

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121–22.

<sup>6</sup> On this evocative image in Islamic mysticism, see my *The Feather of Simurgh: the "Licit Magic" of the Arts in Medieval Islam* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1988), pp. 138–41; and more generally, Manfred Ullmann, *Das Motiv des Spiegels in der arabischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.



it is only a faint foreshadowing of a much more outspoken criticism that follows in a subsequent section. We shall return to this point later on. For the moment, we must take into account one further comment of Ibn Ṭufayl concerning his way of speaking.

At the end of his book the author explains that in order to guide those who took for gnostic experience things that had nothing to do with it, he has decided to deviate from the habit of concealing this kind of knowledge usually followed by his predecessors. Nevertheless, he continues, "we have spread a thin veil over the secrets we have committed to these few pages, a subtle cover easily torn by those who are qualified, but impermeable for those who are not entitled to pierce it."<sup>9</sup>

The problem of the linguistic mediation of esoteric truths, i.e. the question of which truth is expressible and by what linguistic means, thus forms a major concern of this book. Some of the notions Ibn Ṭufayl uses in discussing this problem, particularly *ramz* and *ishāra*, are well-known terms which by his time already had a long tradition. I would suggest, therefore, that we first take a closer look at this tradition to form an idea of the meaning linked with these terms, and that we then ask ourselves whether or not—and if so, in which sense—Ibn Ṭufayl followed in the footsteps of previous writers in using a language of *ramz* and *ishāra*. In finding the answer to these questions we will be able to define the nature of his text in terms of literary affiliation and perhaps also of genre.

### *Ramz and Ishāra in Islamic Literature*

Technical terms in Islamic culture are usually rooted either in the Qur'ān, in the Hellenistic tradition, or in both of these sources. This last possibility is the case with our two terms *ishāra* and *ramz*. Remarkably enough, both of them occur, even though only once, in a relevant context in the Qur'ān. *Ramz* is used in the story of Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. When he cannot believe that he and his wife will in their old age have a son, he asks God for a sign and receives the answer: *āyatuka allā tukallima l-nāsa thalāthata ayyāmin illā ramzan*, "Thy sign is that thou shalt not speak to men, save by tokens, for three days."<sup>10</sup> In other words, *ramz* here means a gesture, a hint that replaces speech in a situation when the speaker is unable to speak. Now, remarkably enough, the other expression occurs in a very similar situation, in the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Having been reproved by her family after the birth of the child, she received a divine consolation and the order "not to speak to any man" for one day. So when

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>10</sup> Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (3), vs. 41. Qur'ānic passages are cited in the version of Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

her family addressed her reproachfully, "she pointed to the child (*fa-ashārat ilayhi*), but they said: 'How shall we speak to one who is still in the cradle, a little child?'"<sup>11</sup> Thus, again the situation—the *Sitz im Leben*—is one we might call "numinous aphasia," holy speechlessness. One therefore easily understands that the two terms should have been chosen to denote allusive speech, a kind of style and linguistic means appropriate for expressing the ineffable.

However, the two expressions also have non-religious connotations, for both *ramz* and *ishāra* are the equivalents of pre-Islamic Greek and perhaps also Indian or Persian terms. The verb *ramaza*, "to speak in symbols," is used in the Arabic biographies of Greek philosophers, and Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato are all said to have expressed themselves in this way. In the case of Socrates, "his symbolic speech" (*kalāmuhu al-marmūz*) is exemplified by a number of gnomes indicative of the parabolical and cryptic style that came to be labelled as *marmūz* or *ramzī*.<sup>12</sup> In the case of Plato, the respective statement is also revealing: "He used to express his philosophy in symbols and to veil it and speak of it in riddles (*malghūzatan*), so that his intention revealed itself only to those trained in philosophy (*dhawī l-ḥikma*)."<sup>13</sup> This habit of speaking in veiled language was regarded as one of the differences between Plato and Aristotle. Thus in the treatise of al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) on the "Compatibility of the Doctrines of the Two Sages," it is stated that Plato "chose symbols and riddles intentionally for the codification of his doctrines and his wisdom so that only those worthy of it would be able to understand it. But as for Aristotle, his method was clear speech (*al-īdāh*). . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Another relevant usage of *ramz* is to be found in texts of occult character, where *ramz* means a cipher or cover-name, the kind of secret labels that were used, for example, by the alchemists to denote metals, such as "sun" for gold, "moon" for silver, etc.<sup>15</sup> In an Arabic manual of magic produced in the middle of the eleventh century, the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, or "Ultimate Goal of the Philosopher," the following definition of *ramz* is given: "*Ramz*

<sup>11</sup>Sūrat Maryam (19), vs. 29.

<sup>12</sup>Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270), '*Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, edited by August Müller (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-wahbīya, 1299/1882–Königsberg: August Müller, 1884), I, 44–45. For further source material on Plato as *ṣāhib al-rumūz*, see F.W. Zimmermann, "The Origins of the So-Called *Theology of Aristotle*," in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: the Theology and Other Texts*, edited by Jill Kraye, W.F. Ryan, and C.B. Schmitt (London: Warburg Institute, 1986), pp. 143–49. I am grateful to Dr. Zimmermann for kindly pointing this work out to me.

<sup>13</sup>Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, '*Uyūn al-anbā'*, I, 50.

<sup>14</sup>Majid Fakhry, "Reconciliation of Plato and Aristotle," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 26 (1965), pp. 469–78.

<sup>15</sup>See Manfred Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 184–85.

means an expression that does not signify its external sense, but its internal, spiritual sense. In short, it is an expression that has two sides, one known and one unknown."<sup>16</sup>

The idea of an inner meaning that is concealed by an exterior one is also prevalent in the Introduction to *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. Time and again it is emphasized in this long preface, which is by various authors, that this text has a *ẓāhir* and a *bāṭin*. Thus, in the part attributed to one Bihnūd ibn Sahwān we read:

He (the author) put his words in the mouths of animals and wild deer and birds, so that their outward form (*ẓāhiruhu*) would be an amusement (*lahwan*) for both the common people and the elite and its inner meaning (*bāṭinuhu*) an exercise for the minds of the [educated] elite. He also incorporated in it what man needs for the discipline of himself and his family and his entourage, as well as everything he needs for the affairs of his religion and his life in this world and in the hereafter and that which induces him to obey the kings and to avoid what to avoid is more opportune. So he gave it (his work) an exoteric and an esoteric sense (*ẓāhīran wa-bāṭīnan*), as is the habit with books dealing with philosophy. Thus the animals became a means of entertainment, while what they say [became] a source of wisdom and education.<sup>17</sup>

In a later section of this preface, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 139/756), the famous *homme de lettres* who translated *Kalīla wa-Dimna* from Pahlavi into Arabic, writes: "It is of primary importance for the reader of this book that he should know the principles according to which it is composed and the symbols (*rumūz*) that are used in its language."<sup>18</sup>

Finally, we should be aware of the fact that *ramz* is also a familiar term in mystical writing and in poetry of a mystical tinge. In one of his *ghazals*, the great mystical poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) sings the praises of a world in motion, full of things that are "coming steadily" (*āyad hamī*), this phrase being repeated at the end of every line of the poem:

The fragrance of the garden and orchard is coming steadily,  
The fragrance from the friend is coming steadily.

<sup>16</sup>Pseudo-Majrīṭī, "*Picatrix*." *Das Ziel des Weisen*, translated by Helmut Ritter and Martin Plessner (London: Warburg Institute, 1962), p. 177.

<sup>17</sup>*Āthār Ibn al-Muqaffa*, edited by 'Umar Abū l-Naṣr (Beirut: Dār maktabat al-ḥayāt, 1966), pp. 53–54.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 69.

So it continues, until toward the end of the poem Rūmī summarizes by saying:

These are all symbols (*īn hamēh ramz ast*) and the implied meaning is  
That yon world into this world is coming steadily.<sup>19</sup>

Many more examples for this usage could easily be given. However, it seems appropriate that we now turn our attention to the second notion.

Like *ramz*, *ishāra* too has a long history in the terminology of both Arabic and Persian literature. To begin with, let us take note of the epilogue of the marvelous story known under the title of "Man and Animal before the King of the Demons," which is inserted in the *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, "The Treatises of the Brethren of Purity." Here the reader is warned against taking this tale for a childish play or a mere cock-and-bull story; for, as the text continues, "It is our custom to couch truth in words, expressions, and hints (*ishārāt*), in order to prevent people from drawing our secrets out of us (*kay-lā yukhrajā binā 'ammā naḥnu fīhi*)."<sup>20</sup> This is thus approximately the same meaning as that we found in *ramz*, namely a term for a cryptic language. The same connotation is also, I think, included in the title of two famous books, the *Al-Ishārāt al-ilāhīya* of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), and the *Al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), even though the basic meaning of "indication" seems to be in the foreground in these titles.<sup>21</sup>

Remarkably enough, both *ishāra* and *ramz* are treated as figures of speech in the widely used eleventh-century Arabic manual on poetics, the *ʿUmda* of the Andalusian scholar Ibn Rashīq (d. 456/1063–64). His definition of *ishāra* is very much to the point:

*Ishāra* belongs to the rare beauties of poetry, a marvelous eloquence indicative of a far-reaching intention and an extraordinary capacity that only an outstanding, skillful, and well-trained poet can produce. In all genres of speech, this is a guiding spark (*lamḥa dālla*), an epitome, and an allusion (*talwīḥ*) which instructs in a comprehensive way; its meaning is far re-

<sup>19</sup> *Kullīyāt-i dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, edited by Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1336/1957), no. 2897.

<sup>20</sup> *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā' wa-khullān al-wafā'* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1376/1957), II, 377.

<sup>21</sup> For al-Tawḥīdī's *Ishārāt*, see the edition by Wadād al-Qādī (Beirut: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1402/1982), and her remarks on the meaning of *ishāra*, with rich evidence from the text itself, in her Introduction, pp. 20–21.

moved from its outward wording (*ma'nāhu ba'īdun min ḡāhir lafẓihi*).<sup>22</sup>

*Ramz* is treated here under the heading of *ishāra*, and is thus understood as being a form of the latter. It would lead us too far from present concerns to discuss the various types of *ishāra* that Ibn Rashīq considers. Suffice it to quote the rather vague remark he makes about *ramz*: “*Ramz* originally meant veiled speech (*al-kalām al-khafīy*), but later on it came to be used in the sense of *ishāra*.”<sup>23</sup>

To round off this very brief look at the meaning of *ishāra*, let me again adduce some examples from Persian poetry, where *ishāra* too is a common notion. Thus, Ḥāfiẓ (d. 792/1390) makes use of it, presenting himself as the possessor of a secret knowledge of which he will not speak except by way of hints or allusions:

The teaching and instructions of the people of vision are mere hints!

I made an enigmatic remark which I shall not repeat!<sup>24</sup>

Or:

He is worthy of good news who understands hints.

There are many subtleties, but where is a confidant for secrets?<sup>25</sup>

To sum up, we have seen that both *ramz* and *ishāra* are important terms in medieval Islamic thought, embedded in a long tradition, and with roots traceable in the Qur'ān and the Arabicized Greek philosophical heritage. Both point to a veiled language, the language of a speaker who is either unable or unwilling—or both—to express an intended meaning in open speech: unable, because he realizes the ineffability of the truths or experiences he has in mind; unwilling, because he realizes the difficulties or even dangers involved in divulging such truth or experience. In other words, this speaker is in a particular social situation. He belongs to a minority, an elite, people who are at odds with the majority, the ruling ideology or religion and their representatives, their adherents. On the one hand, this elite has an elite consciousness, something that—modifying a central notion of Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406)—we could label as “intellectual *‘aṣabiya*.” In

<sup>22</sup>Ibn Rashīq, *Al-‘Umda fī maḥāsini al-shi‘r wa-ādābihi wa-naqdihi*, edited by Muḥammad Muḥyī l-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Dār al-jīl, 1972), I, 302.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 306.

<sup>24</sup>*Dīvān-i... Ḥāfiẓ*, edited by Muḥammad Qazvīnī and Qāsim Ghanī (Tehran: Chāp-i Sīnā, n.d.), no. 353:3. In the Persian the first hemistich reads: *Talqīn u dars-i ahl-i nazar yak ishāratast*.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 19:4.

other words, they do not want to share their knowledge with the masses, whom they deem incapable of grasping it. On the other hand, they are aware that their being different, at variance with the rest of the community, may expose them to dangers. Some of the Arabic biographies of Greek philosophers are also revealing in that they portray individuals who struggle against the evils of their time and their society, and are therefore being persecuted, threatened, condemned, forced to emigrate, and as in the case of Socrates, perhaps even sentenced to death.<sup>26</sup> These are thus the main reasons why philosophers and mystics, gnostics and heretics would use a veiled language, and this background did not change throughout the centuries. It was the situation still prevailing in the time of Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>27</sup>

### *Modes of Allegorical and Symbolic Expression*

Which, then, were the techniques of veiling used in the tradition that described its nature with terms such as *ramz* and *ishāra*? If we try to find a common denominator I think we may fall back on the dichotomy of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*. Though predominantly connected with a mystical context, these terms do appear in other contexts. Thus, as mentioned above, we find this label used several times in the Introduction of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. In other words, *ramz* and *ishāra*—but *ramz* in particular and less so *ishāra*—would be the elements of a diction that conveys at least two layers of meanings linked with each other by analogies perceived or constructed by the author. It is easy to see this relation between an exterior and an interior layer in a *ghazal* of Rūmī or Ḥāfiẓ depicting a scene in a tavern, and meaning mystical intoxication and the like. And it is again not difficult to see the dichotomy in mystical stories as we find them in the epics of poets such as Sanāʾī (d. 526/1131), Rūmī, Jāmī (d. 898/1492), and many others, where either the action points to an aspect of man's relation to God, or the figures of a narrative represent powers and capacities of the human soul. Very often these stories were deciphered by the authors themselves in an appendix, as, for example, in the *Mathnawī* of Rūmī<sup>28</sup> or in the case of *Salāmān u Absāl*

<sup>26</sup> Apart from the tragic death of Socrates, which had an enormous impact on Islamic philosophical thought, the Arabic biography of Aristotle knows of him being suspected of atheism and having to leave the country for a certain time. Furthermore, Plato's remarks in the *Republic* (496b ff.) about the difficult situation of the philosopher in a corrupt state became known through the various paraphrases of and commentaries on this work. Cf. E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: an Introductory Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 158–74.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the Introduction by Lawrence Conrad, pp. 9–13 above, on the difficult situation facing philosophers in the western Maghrib and al-Andalus.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., for example, Rūmī's interpretation of the first story in *The Mathnawī of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī*, edited and translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1925–40), I, 16.

by Jāmī;<sup>29</sup> or they were analyzed by later commentators, as in the case of the allegories of Ibn Sīnā and al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), which Corbin preferred to label *récits visionnaires*.<sup>30</sup> Less obvious is the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* relation in the case of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, where one layer of meaning is the action of the animals and the second one the intended moral for the human context. Rather than with a dichotomy of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, we have to do here with a simple projection of human behavior into the animal world; but still the message is built on analogies, those real or fictitious analogies between human and animal behavior.

However, the dichotomy of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* is apparently not the only possibility in a text characterized by its author or by a competent medieval reader as being of the *ramz* and *ishāra* type. Thus, if we look at the gnomes attributed to Socrates and qualified as symbolic (*marmūz*) by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668/1270) or his source, we see that here we have to do with various kinds of veiled language, not necessarily having any clear meaning on the surface, but being of a cryptic nature, e.g. "Don't eat the black-tailed!", "Acquire the twelve by the twelve!", "Sow with the white and harvest with the black!" According to the explanations given in the text these gnomes mean: "Keep away from sinning!", "Acquire the twelve virtues by means of the twelve members (eyes, ears, nostrils, hands, feet, tongue, and penis)!", "Sow with weeping and harvest with laughter!"<sup>31</sup>

In the case of the above-mentioned "Man and Animal Before the King of the Demons," the fictitious character is as evident as it is in the case of *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. But there is again no *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy of the mystic type, and not even a projection of human behavior into animals (except that the animals use human language), for the tale deals with the conflict between man and animal as it exists in reality: the acting animals stand for themselves, as do the various representatives of the human race. On the other hand, it does contain many barely veiled side-swipes at certain professions, such as astrology, and at the official representatives of religion, for this text ultimately pleads for a supra-confessional supra-national humanity, a human type who combines in himself all the virtues of the various

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Jāmī's explanation of the meaning of the epic of Salāmān and Absāl under the caption: "Indication that the intent of this story is not the [outward] form of it but another meaning, which will now be explained," *Mathnavī-i Haft Awrang*, edited by Mudarris-i Gīlānī (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-i Sa'dī, 1337/1959), pp. 362-63.

<sup>30</sup>See his two fundamental books *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire*, I: *Étude sur le cycle des récits avicenniens* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve, 1954); and *L'archange empourpré: quinze traités et récits mystiques traduits du persan et de l'arabe par Shihāboddīn Yahyā Sohravardī* (Paris: Fayard, 1976).

<sup>31</sup>Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, I, 44.

races and religions.<sup>32</sup> These, then, are the "hints" the author had in mind when he spoke of *ishārāt* as the basic stylistic element of this story and its purpose to prevent people from "drawing our secrets out of us."

It may thus be seen that *ramz* and *ishāra* are very similar in meaning, even though they can perhaps be differentiated from each other in that *ramz* rather points to the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy whereas *ishāra* preferably means an allusive diction. It has, however, also turned out that the narrative-message relation of a text labelled as "symbolic," even though usually built on some kind of analogy, may differ considerably from one case to another, and that the main problem rests exactly in giving a clear definition of this relation.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Symbolism of Ibn Ṭufayl*

Let us now turn to our final question, namely, what is the place of Ibn Ṭufayl's novel in the framework of the tradition outlined above, and in what sense could he claim to have made use in his text of *ramz* and *ishāra*?

First of all, I think there can be little doubt that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* is not a text of the usual *ramz* type, i.e. it does not show a *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy built on analogies between the two realms of body and soul. The hero passes through the stages of human life; he discovers clothing, weapons, and fire; and he learns from animals how to hunt and how to defend himself. None of this points to other layers of meaning or other ontological levels: it rather typifies general human development. And if, when confronted with the death of the gazelle, Ḥayy concludes the existence of an invisible principle of life, this again has nothing to do with symbolism.<sup>34</sup> The same result obtains if we consider the animals' role in this narrative. The gazelle, one of the stock metaphors for female beauty in Islamic poetry, does not have this connotation in Ibn Ṭufayl's text.<sup>35</sup> The raven, normally a symbol of death already in early Arabic poetry, appears only after the death of the gazelle, when there is no longer any need for symbols. And its function

<sup>32</sup>See the beautiful description of the perfect man worthy of being lord over the animals in *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, II, 376.

<sup>33</sup>That *ramz* has so far attracted little attention as a technical term is indicated, for example, by the fact that it is not mentioned in the indices of such fundamental works as Corbin's above-mentioned studies on Ibn Sīnā and al-Suhrawardī, nor in Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj*, 2nd edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Fritz Meier, *Sa'id-i Abū l-Ḥayr (357-440/967-1049). Wirklichkeit und Legende* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976). *Ishāra*, on the other hand, is mentioned in the indices to the works of Schimmel, Massignon, and Meier.

<sup>34</sup>For a differing view on this, see the discussion by Fedwa Malti-Douglas, above, pp. 61-63.

<sup>35</sup>Cf. my "The Lady Gazelle and her Murderous Glances," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 20 (1989), pp. 1-11.



is to teach the boy how to bury a dead body.<sup>36</sup> The same is true for the second part of the novel when the hero comes into contact with other human beings.

Still, the meaning of this text is certainly not restricted to just the strange story of a certain individual of unusual fortune. Ibn Ṭufayl obviously deals with the development of the human mind, and so his technique is not to couch a hidden truth within an allegory, but rather to typify the general through the particular, the universal through the individual. This characterization is, however, still insufficient. For if the early stages of Ḥayy's development resemble the stages experienced by an average human being—except, of course, that he finds out everything by himself!—his later stages gradually elevate him over the normal man. His development thus typifies not the development of any human intelligence. What Ibn Ṭufayl intends is the development of the Platonic-Neoplatonic philosopher who does not content himself with mastering Aristotelianism, but seeks to ascend further, to pass from logical thinking and rational comprehension to vision and gnosis, and finally, to become God-like. Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān thus typifies the ideal man.

In the same manner, Salāmān and Absāl typify other and mutually opposite characters of human society, a difference expressed in the text by the following passage:

Whereas Absāl was more intent on delving into the *bāṭin* and keener on finding out the spiritual meanings and searching for esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*), Salāmān rather clung to the *ẓāhir*, kept away from esoteric exegesis, and shunned arbitrary decisions (i.e. free thought, *taṣarruf*) and contemplation. Both, however, were serious in their fulfillment of external religious observances, their self-examination, and their struggle against concupiscence.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the community to which these two new protagonists belong evidently typifies a monotheistic society, or rather Islam itself. This is never expressly stated, but follows from the religious duties observed by this community, which are those of Islam, namely prayer, alms tax, fasting, and pilgrimage.<sup>38</sup>

From this it emerges that the criticisms directed at this religion through the mouth of Ḥayy are criticisms that the author himself launches against

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<sup>36</sup> As has been noted by several contributors to this volume (Conrad, p. 24 above; Malti-Douglas, p. 63 above), this image is Qur'ānic.

<sup>37</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 136–37.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

Islam. These would then be some of the “hints” we find in this text. But here one must proceed with caution. For not only does the author insert Qur’ānic quotations into his narrative, he also expressly states that Absāl’s and Ḥayy’s religious concepts prove ultimately to be identical. What Absāl learns from Ḥayy is to look at the *sharī’a* with spiritual eyes, to give it an esoteric interpretation. After Ḥayy has told his friend about his visions:

Absāl did not doubt that all the things mentioned in his *sharī’a* about God, His angels, His scriptures, His apostles, the Last Judgment, Paradise, and Hell, were the likenesses of what Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān had beheld in his visions. And the eye of his heart opened and the fire of his mind was kindled, and he became persuaded of the congruence of reason and religion (*al-ma‘qūl wa-l-manqūl*), and the methods of esoteric exegesis were revealed to him. And there remained no difficulty in his religious law (*shar‘*) which did not become clear to him. . . .<sup>39</sup>

When Absāl “realized that Ḥayy was ‘one of God’s friends—no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow;’<sup>40</sup> he devoted himself to serving him and following his example and to adopting his advice in cases where the legal observances he had learned in his religion seemed to contradict one another.”<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, Ḥayy had his friend explain to him the “formal observances (*al-a‘māl al-zāhira*) such as prayer, alms tax, fasting, and pilgrimage, and began to fulfill them following the order of that man of whose veracity he was persuaded, except that there remained two things in his mind of which he kept wondering and did not grasp the kind of wisdom [concealed] in them.”<sup>42</sup> It is only here, then, after the basic identity of Absāl’s religious beliefs and the essence of Ḥayy’s visions has been expressly asserted, that the criticism of the islanders’ religion is advanced. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the few phrases that contain the criticisms express Ibn Ṭufayl’s attitude toward Islam, and we therefore deem it necessary to quote them in full:

One thing was: Why did this apostle use parables (*daraba l-amthāl*) in most of what he explained to the people about the divine world and refrain from setting forth [the Truth], so that people fell into gross anthropomorphism and came to believe

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>40</sup> Sūrat Yūnus (10), vs. 62.

<sup>41</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 145.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145–46.

things concerning the nature of the True God, things He is detached and exempt from, and similarly concerning recompense and punishment? The other thing was: Why did he limit himself to prescribing only these religious duties and obligatory services, and allow the acquisition of riches and over-indulgence in eating, with the result that people occupied themselves with vainness and avoided the Truth. His own opinion was that no one should acquire more than what he needed to sustain his physical existence. As for material possessions (*al-māl*), they had no meaning for him. He examined the legal prescriptions concerning the alms tax and its subdivisions, buying and selling and usury, and the various kinds of punishments (*al-ḥudūd wa-l-ʿuqūbāt*), and found them all strange and [unnecessarily] prolix. "If people understood things as they really are," he would say, "they would refrain from these vanities; they would turn to the Truth and would stand in no need of all this. No one would have material possessions for which alms tax would be sought from him, for the theft of which hands would be cut off, or over the blatant grasping at which souls would be lost." What made him think this was his supposition that everyone possessed an outstanding inborn capacity, a penetrating intelligence, and a resolute soul. He did not know the degree of stupidity (*balāda*), deficiency, bad sense, and weak resolution that characterized them, nor the fact that they "are but as the cattle; nay, they are further astray from the way."<sup>43</sup>

From these words it becomes entirely clear that Ibn Ṭufayl implants his narrative in that kind of a societal setting which, as we stated above, was usually at the bottom of literary texts dominated by the dichotomy of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, a setting, furthermore, which was the one prevailing in his own time. Ḥayy's elite consciousness develops at the moment he encounters that society and tries in vain to raise them to a higher level by teaching them his own experiences. What he soon realizes is that their prophet is not to be blamed for the character of his message: "When he had understood the state of man and that most people are on the level of animals lacking the faculty of reason, he knew that the whole of wisdom, guidance, and bliss was contained in what the apostles had taught and what was contained in the *sharī'a*, and that no other way was viable and no addition possible."<sup>44</sup>

The author thus leaves us with an unsolved contradiction. On the one hand, he states the identity of Absāl's *sharī'a*-based belief with Ḥayy's

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146–47. The Qur'ānic citation is from Sūrat al-Furqān (25), vs. 44.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

esoteric knowledge, an identity arrived at—as is expressly stated—through esoteric exegesis (*ta'wīl*). On the other hand, he asserts that this *sharī'a* and this revelation are adjusted to the lowermost level of the human species, a state of affairs that cannot, however, be otherwise, since this level is represented by the vast majority of mankind. To our ears it may sound like a depreciation of the Creator, yet Ibn Ṭufayl presents his view as that of the Qur'ān itself. In other words, he projects the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy into the Qur'ānic view of human understanding, and then again derives it from there, using it as the justification for his own interpretation of the world.

To be sure, Ibn Ṭufayl was not the first one to do this. The same stratagem had been used by his predecessors among the Neoplatonizing Aristotelian Arabic philosophers, and was to be used by Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) after him.<sup>45</sup> However, it seems to me that the ambiguity of this procedure is particularly palpable in the text of Ibn Ṭufayl. As a present-day reader, at least, one remains with a feeling of doubt as to whether this insertion of Qur'ānic material in a text which so obviously takes a skeptical attitude toward the religion based on that very book is serious at all, or rather a ruse, whether it is only—to use a notion introduced by Ian Richard Netton—the “Qur'ānic cloak,”<sup>46</sup> in which case the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy would appear in an entirely different light. For the *ẓāhir* of this text—to use Ibn Ṭufayl's own words, the “thin veil,” the “subtle cover easily torn by those who are qualified”—would, viewed from this perspective, then consist of all that is aimed at assuaging the orthodox reader, whereas its *bāṭin* would comprise the proposition of a significant question as to the spirituality of the *sharī'a* and, ultimately, the improvability of the human species in general. In other words, the *bāṭin* of this text would be the opposite of its *ẓāhir*.

However, such an assumption would undoubtedly go too far, for it would impute insincerity to the author and accordingly deprive his text of its ethical value and impact.<sup>47</sup> The author's sincerity seems to me, however, to be beyond doubt. It vibrates in the text, particularly in those passages where he describes the mystic's elevation to higher spheres. What the text reveals by its symbols and its hints, however, is the interior tension felt by an individual like Ibn Ṭufayl, who was “convinced of the veracity” of

<sup>45</sup>In his famous *Faṣl al-maqāl* and *Al-Kashf 'an manāḥij al-adilla*. See Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany, “Ibn Rushd,” in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, edited by M.M. Sharif (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963–66), I, 544–51.

<sup>46</sup>Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: an Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-Ṣafā')* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), pp. 78–89.

<sup>47</sup>For a more detailed argument of this point, see Salim Kemal's discussion below, pp. 225–28.

Muḥammad and yet considered the legal framework of Islamic society—at least in the lands familiar to him, al-Andalus and the western Maghrib—to be aimed at a level of human understanding far exceeded by his own philosophical erudition.

The reason why "the community of pristine religion and the genuine Sacred Law" should have forbidden delving into the kind of truth Ibn Ṭufayl tries to convey in his novel is thus not simply the theological issue of union with God. It is the mystic's (as well as the philosopher's) arrogance, his alleged superior spirituality, and the condescending or even contemptuous outlook toward the *sharī'a* that results from that attitude. It is understandable that an orthodox reader should have felt discomfited or even outraged by such texts. The veil Ibn Ṭufayl spread over his skeptical view of the *sharī'a* was certainly thin enough to be torn also by such a reader.

Ibn Ṭufayl projects his whole personal resignation in his hero, who at the end of the story assures Salāmān—the exoteric leader, pious legist, and orthodox activist—and his adherents that:

he shared their belief and followed their path; and he urged them to adhere to the limits of the law and to the formal observances, and not to delve into things which did not concern them. . . . He and his friend Absāl knew that there was no salvation for this eager but deficient group except by this path, and that were they to be raised above it to the height of true insight (or: vision, *istibṣār*) they would fail.<sup>48</sup>

This must no doubt be taken seriously. The text does not, however, remain at the level of resignation. Ibn Ṭufayl shows the way out; he indicates how the gap between his hero's purely spiritual rank and Absāl's training in exoteric religion could be bridged. The solution of this problem lay in *ta'wīl*, or esoteric exegesis, allowing for the adaption of the meaning of the Qur'ān to one's own philosophical doctrines and personal persuasions. This was how the philosophers of Islam had managed to reconcile their intellectual training with their religious belief and had tried to be—or appear as—Muslims without betraying their philosophical tenets. Ibn Ṭufayl chose the same way, and he was practicing it in his novel. One striking example is the above-quoted verse speaking of those who are "but as the cattle; nay, they are further astray from the way." For there can be little doubt that these words refer to the opponents of Muḥammad, the unbelieving and the hypocrites, whereas Ibn Ṭufayl uses the phrase to refer to Absāl's fellow islanders, i.e. the average Muslim. This, then, shows us the arbitrary

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<sup>48</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 153–54.

misleading use he is making of the Qur'ānic text. No wonder, therefore, that in orthodox circles *ta'wīl* itself would meet with the same suspicion as was felt toward people who tended to use it.

### *Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Sīnā*

Let us finally compare Ibn Ṭufayl's novel with its predecessor, Ibn Sīnā's *récit visionnaire* of the same title. The differences are striking. First of all, Ibn Sīnā's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is not a personification of the human mind or the intellectual part of the soul, but of the active intellect, *al-'aql al-fa' 'āl*. A second decisive difference lies in the fact that in the case of Ibn Sīnā the development of the soul with its various stages is symbolized by a journey, the pilgrimage of the soul,<sup>49</sup> whereas Ibn Ṭufayl shows the development of his hero's intellect through his life on an island. Thirdly, the journey described by Ibn Sīnā leads through an at least partly spiritual universe: it consists of purely spiritual stages, concerns man's interior life exclusively, and is not put into practice by the narrator, who only hears the description of it from Ḥayy. In contrast, Ibn Ṭufayl's island is realistically conceived and his hero experiences and achieves his ascension by passing through a Crusoe-like period in practical life before he reaches the purely spiritual stages. On the other hand, Ibn Sīnā's *récit* lays much more stress on the reality of evil as part of the human soul than does Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>50</sup>

Comparison of the two texts leads us to a last question: does Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* represent the human intellect as it develops in the life of an individual, in particular that of the perfect-man type, or does it represent the development of the human mind in history, from primitivity to the highest state of spiritualization? The question is related to the one often raised with regard to Rūmī's famous verses on the ascension of the soul:

From the moment you came into the world of being,  
A ladder was placed before you that you might escape.  
First you were mineral, later you turned to plant,  
Then you became animal: how should this be a secret to you?  
Afterward you were made man, with knowledge, reason, faith;  
Behold the body, which is a portion of the dust-pit, how perfect  
it has grown!

<sup>49</sup>This method was later often followed by other mystical thinkers and poets, such as Sanā'ī in his *Sayr al-'ibād ilā l-ma'ād*. Cf. my "Sanā'ī's 'Jenseitsreise der Gottesknechte' als *Poesia docta*," *Der Islam*, 60 (1983), pp. 77–90.

<sup>50</sup>For Ibn Sīnā's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, see Corbin, *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire*, I, 138–79.

When you have travelled on from man, you will doubtless become an angel;  
After that you are done with the earth: your station is in heaven.  
Pass again even from angelhood: enter that ocean,  
That your drop may become a sea which is a hundred seas of Oman.<sup>51</sup>

It has been contended that Rūmī here envisaged the ascension of the human species in a pre-Darwinian sense. However, this is certainly not true.<sup>52</sup> He has in mind the fate and the potential of the individual's soul. I think the same is also the case with Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, yet his view is much more pessimistic than that of Rūmī. In a society that—as Ibn Ṭufayl saw it—resembled "cattle" and therefore had a primitive and crude religious law, the philosopher could not develop; hence his obligation to opt for emigration, life in solitude, an idea already advanced by al-Fārābī and Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139).<sup>53</sup>

### Conclusion

To close, let us try to summarize. We have discussed the two terms *ramz* and *ishāra*, considering some glimpses of their history and of their importance for the history of Islamic thought and literature in particular. This has led us to consideration of another pair of terms closely linked to the first one: the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy. We found out that the old literary convention of veiled language continued to flourish also in Islamic times, owing to the more or less constant prevalence of a political and social situation in which open discourse was—and unfortunately still is in more than one case in our present time—a dangerous undertaking. We stated that

<sup>51</sup> *Selected Poems from the Dīwānī Shamsi Tabrīz*, edited and translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), no. 12.

<sup>52</sup> Speculation among scholars about medieval Islamic precursors to the theories of Darwin continues to flourish despite repeated and fairly straight-forward refutations. That this view is a serious mistake was already demonstrated in T.J. de Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, translated by Edward R. Jones (London: Luzac, 1903), pp. 91–92, and has been reiterated, with various other arguments, by more recent scholars. See, for example, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, revised edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 71 n. The debate can be traced to nineteenth-century arguments among Arab intellectuals over the topic, in which adherents of *darwinīya* sought to find medieval precedents which would legitimate these theories as ideas of ultimately Arab origin. See Adel A. Ziadat, *Western Science in the Arab World: the Impact of Darwinism, 1860–1930* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 25–26.

<sup>53</sup> On al-Fārābī's idea of the *nawābit*, see Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, p. 138. For Ibn Bājja's "Conduct of the Solitary," see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Longman's, 1983), p. 292.

the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy is usually built on analogies, in the case of Ṣūfī texts analogies between the realms of the body and the soul, but that other narrative/message relations may also sometimes appear under that label.

We have tried to analyze the novel of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in this light and have arrived at the conclusion that instead of a *ẓāhir/bāṭin* dichotomy of the Ṣūfī type we have to do here with another structure where an individual's development points to the development of a type, i.e. the narrated reality does not symbolize, but rather typifies. In a further turn of our discussion we raised the question of the kind of hints the text contains, what the author had in mind when talking of the "thin veil...easily torn by those who are qualified," and we suggested that this refers mainly to his critical attitude toward the conservative legal framework of society in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in Ibn Ṭufayl's day. The text betrays the resignation of a philosopher who has tried in vain to persuade his contemporaries of the necessity of attaining a higher level of insight.

Whether or not one should call *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* a philosophical novel depends of course on what one understands by philosophy. However, given the fact that the hero reaches his goal not in the realm of reason but in the vision of God and the mystical union with the highest being (without, however, forswearing the use of his rational faculty), one could perhaps rather call it an initiational tale.



## CHAPTER SIX

### ḤAYY IN THE LAND OF ABSĀL: IBN ṬUFAYL AND ṢŪFISM IN THE WESTERN MAGHRIB DURING THE MUWAḤḤID ERA

Vincent J. Cornell

(Duke University)

Despite the great popularity enjoyed by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ṭufayl’s *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in recent years, frustratingly little remains known, either in the West or in the Arab world, about the life of its author.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, what we do know about this remarkable man, including the short account given to us by Ibn Khallikān,<sup>2</sup> is largely based on the unique manuscript of a single work—‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī’s *Al-Mu‘jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib* (written ca. 621/1224). In this account we find that Ibn Ṭufayl was:

... among the most versatile scholars [and]... one of the philosophers (*falāsifa*) of the Muslims. He was accomplished in the collection of volumes of philosophy (*falsafa*) and studied under a number of those most accomplished in this field. Among them were Abū Bakr ibn al-Ṣā’igh, known among us as Ibn Bājja, and others. I have seen belonging to this Abū Bakr [a number of] works on the branches (*anwā’*) of *falsafa*, such as naturalism, metaphysics, and others. Among his treatises on the natural sciences is one that he called the *Treatise of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, in which he attempted to show, according to their method, the

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<sup>1</sup>Some of the manuscripts cited in this article were consulted in the course of research funded by the Fulbright-Hayes program of the U.S. Department of Education and the Social Science Research Council. The opinions presented herein are entirely those of the author and are not representative of these institutions.

<sup>2</sup>Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282–83), *Wafāyāt al-a’yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-zamān*, edited by Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-ṭhaqāfa, 1969), VII, 134–35.

origin of the human type (*mabda' al-naw' al-insānī*). This treatise, although small in size, is of great value in that art. Among his works on metaphysics is a treatise on the soul (*nafs*), which I have seen written in his own hand, may God have mercy on him. Toward the end of his life he turned his interest toward metaphysics (*al-'ilm al-ilāhī*) and renounced all else. He was especially interested in reconciling [the fields of] philosophical knowledge (*ḥikma*) and the Law and exalted the authoritative-ness of prophecies (*nubūwāt*), both exoterically and esoterically. Besides this [specialization], he had a broad knowledge of the Islamic sciences. I was informed that he took a salary from the state, along with a number of those who performed occupations of service, such as doctors, architects, secretaries, poets, archers, and the military, including those of other groups. He used to say: "If they had lost the science of music, I would have provided it for them!" The Commander of the Faithful Abū Ya'qūb [Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Gūmī] had a strong infatuation and love for him. I was informed that he would stay with [the Commander of the Faithful] in the palace, day and night, and not appear for days at a time. This Abū Bakr was one of the benefits of the age, both in himself and in his usefulness for others. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere we find that Ibn Ṭufayl was born around the year 510/1116 in Guadix (Wādī Āsh), northeast of the city of Granada in Muslim Spain. The son of a scholar from Marchena who later resided in Almería, the future philosopher traveled in 542/1147 to the Muwaḥḥid capital of Marrakesh in the company of Ibn Miḥān, the architect and former ruler of Guadix who was designated by the caliph 'Abd al-Mu'min (r. 524–58/1130–63) to direct the construction of the irrigation works that watered the royal gardens of al-Buḥayra.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl's formal entry into the upper reaches of the

<sup>3</sup>'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Marrākushī, *Al-Mu'jib fī talkhīs akhbār al-Maghrib*, edited by Muḥammad Sa'īd al-'Aryān and Muḥammad al-'Arabī al-'Alamī (Casablanca: Dār al-kitāb, 1978), pp. 349–50. The assertion that Ibn Ṭufayl was a pupil of Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139) is, of course, erroneous, according to what Ibn Ṭufayl himself writes in the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*. See Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, edited by Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Carlos Asenjo Sedano, *Guadix: la ciudad musulmana del siglo XV y su transformación en la ciudad neocristiana del siglo XVI* (Granada: Excelentísima Diputación Provincial, 1983), p. 47 n. 71. Sometime after Ibn Ṭufayl's death the city of Guadix became famous throughout the western Islamic world for its large garden of herbal medicines, created by the surgeon Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Farah, who was known popularly as Ibn al-Shafra: *ibid.*, p. 48; also H.P.J. Renaud, "Un chirurgien musulman du royaume de Grenade: Muḥammad ash-Shafra," *Hespéris*, 20 (1935), pp. 1–20.

Muwaḥḥid administration apparently came about in 549/1154, when he was appointed Confidential Secretary (*kātim al-asrār*) for the governor of Ceuta, the *amīr* Abū Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-Muʿmin.<sup>5</sup> During this service he was noticed by the new Muwaḥḥid caliph Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (r. 558–80/1163–84), who made him his personal physician. According to al-Marrākushī, it was most likely in the year 566/1169 that this accomplished scholar and courtier introduced the noted philosopher Abū l-Walīd ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) to the caliph and urged him to write his commentaries on the works of Aristotle.<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that one of his contemporaries was to refer to him as “the master of impiety” for his philosophical beliefs, Ibn Ṭufayl never fell out of favor with his powerful patron and remained honored and financially supported by both Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf and his successor Yaʿqūb al-Mansūr (r. 580–95/1184–99) until he died around the year 581/1185.<sup>7</sup>

Nowhere has the confusion concerning Ibn Ṭufayl’s background been more acute than over the nature of his apparent mysticism. Indeed, this argument had its genesis as far back as 1909, with the initial publication of Léon Gauthier’s seminal study of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and its author, and once even revolved around the supposed vocalization of certain words in the manuscript text.<sup>8</sup> Whatever their point of view on questions such as these may have been, most Western scholars have assumed that Ibn Ṭufayl was at least strongly influenced by the ideas of his Ṣūfī contemporaries in al-Andalus and that, despite his apparent criticism of the practices of certain Ṣūfīs at the beginning of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, his references to “taste” (*dhawq*), “presence” (*ḥudūr*), and mystical vision (*mushāhada*) were more “Ṣūfī” than philosophical in nature.<sup>9</sup>

In making such assumptions, however, none of these scholars seems to have seriously considered whether or not Ibn Ṭufayl truly practiced a Ṣūfī

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Al-Marrākushī, *Muʿjib*, pp. 353–54.

<sup>7</sup> Asenjo, *Guadix*, pp. 47–48. The modern Moroccan biographer al-ʿAbbās ibn Ibrāhīm, citing alternative sources from the Maghrib, claims that Ibn Ṭufayl was born in 494/1100–1101 and died either in 581/1185 or 578/1182–83. See Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Al-Iʿlām bi-man ḥalla Marrākush wa-Aghmāt min al-aʿlām* (Rabat: Al-Maṭbaʿa al-malakīya, 1976), IV, 117–20.

<sup>8</sup> See Gauthier’s *Ibn Thofail: sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909), pp. 59–61 n. 1. Lenn Evan Goodman, in his *Ibn Ṭufayl’s Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* (New York: Twayne, 1972), pp. 167–69 n. 1, devoted much effort trying to determine whether Ibn Ṭufayl meant to refer to his philosophy as *al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya* (“Eastern Philosophy”) or *al-ḥikma al-mushriqīya* (supposedly meaning “the Wisdom of the East”). Sami S. Hawi mercifully put an end to this argument by pointing out that the two readings mean essentially the same thing. See Sami S. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), pp. 11–12 n. 3. He could have added that the term *al-mushriqīya* is a linguistic impossibility in Arabic.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the terminology employed in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 6, 10.

spiritual method, and, if so, how this practice fit into the prevailing currents of Islamic thought in the sixth/twelfth-century western Maghrib. In the interest of fairness it is worth pointing out that this evasion of an important issue by Western scholars was to a large extent a problem not of their own making, since neither al-Marrākushī nor most other early biographers of Ibn Ṭufayl ever mentioned him as anything but a *ḥaylasūf* and a practitioner of the esoteric arts. A more serious oversight on their part, however, was the fact that these same scholars neglected to consult a number of major North African works on Ṣūfism, some contemporary with Ibn Ṭufayl, that could have shed significant light on this question. This second omission can largely be laid at the feet of a stubborn and lively prejudice in the field of Islamic studies that still persists, despite all evidence to the contrary, in regarding the lands along the southern shore of the western Mediterranean as a cultural and intellectual backwater of only marginal historical importance. By denying or overlooking the long-lasting and seminal influence exercised over al-Andalus by theologians and mystics from the “other shore” of the Maghrib for at least one hundred years before the birth of Ibn Ṭufayl, these scholars missed a prime opportunity to find the answer to at least one question about the nature of the Andalusian philosopher’s mysticism that had been available to them since 1958. In that year the French orientalist and Maghrib specialist Adolphe Faure published a critical edition of the noted Moroccan Ṣūfī biographical work, *Kitāb al-tashawwuf ilā rijāl al-taṣawwuf*. Within a rather lengthy introduction concerning the nature of Ṣūfī doctrine, the author of this work, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf ibn Yaḥyā al-Tādilī (d. 627/1229–30), an elder contemporary of the historian al-Marrākushī, mentions that his shaykh and teacher, Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad ibn Yazīd, was a disciple of none other than “the illustrious shaykh, the *faqīh*, the learned scholar, the unique Abū Bakr ibn Ṭufayl.”<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, al-Tādilī informs us about the nature of Ibn Ṭufayl’s Ṣūfī *silsila*, or spiritual lineage, saying that it went through Abū l-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abbād, another physician at the Muwaḥḥid court in Marrakesh, who gave up his post for a life of asceticism and ended his days as a comb-maker, via one “al-Ḥājj al-Baghdādī” of the Banū Jamūḥ family of Fez, to Majd al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1126), the brother of the famous theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).<sup>11</sup>

The text of al-Tādilī’s *Tashawwuf* thus clearly establishes the previously assumed “Ṣūfism” of Ibn Ṭufayl. And as he is not known to have visited Marrakesh until his journey there in 542/1147, the fact that his spiritual mentor was based in Marrakesh suggests that it was only later in his life

<sup>10</sup> Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf al-Tādilī, *Kitāb al-tashawwuf ilā rijāl al-taṣawwuf*, edited by Adolphe Faure (Rabat: Editions techniques nord-africaines, 1958), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

that our author became systematically involved in the study and practice of Ṣūfism. This new information, however, confronts us with a second, more important, and more intractable problem—that of deciding what the nature of this Ṣūfism actually was and whether or not it was representative of the Ṣūfī tradition as a whole in the western Maghrib during the Muwaḥḥid era. The object of this paper, therefore, will be to begin to answer these questions, first by examining the nature of the majoritarian tradition of early western Maghribī Ṣūfism in its socio-historical context, and then by comparing the extant writings of Ibn Ṭufayl with the doctrinal works left to posterity by his Maghribī Ṣūfī contemporaries, to assess whether or not the philosophical points of view espoused in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* really correspond to those of sixth/twelfth-century Andalusian and Moroccan mysticism.

### *Andalusian Ṣūfism in the Murābiṭ and Muwaḥḥid Eras*

The two centuries spanning the years between 400/1009–10 and 610/1213–14 comprised an age marked by profound socio-cultural upheavals in Islamic Spain—upheavals that, in the popular imagination at least, tended to be associated with a series of cataclysmic political dislocations. These included, among other events, the fall of the cities of Toledo, Zaragoza, and Valencia to Christian forces and the subsequent retrenchment of Muslim-occupied lands as thousands of refugees fled south from the Northern Marches and settled in the principalities of Seville, Granada, and the Iberian Levant; the establishment of Moroccan hegemony over the southern part of the Iberian peninsula under the Murābiṭūn and the Muwaḥḥids, which culminated in the destruction of the Ṭāʾifa political system that had succeeded the Umayyad caliphate of Córdoba; the populist revolt of the *murīdūn* in Gharb al-Andalus (the Algarve of present-day Portugal), which greatly weakened the ability of the Murābiṭ military forces to respond to external threats, thus indirectly aiding the Christian conquests; and the populist revolution instituted by the Muwaḥḥids, which in many parts of al-Andalus overthrew previous authority structures and allowed members of formerly disenfranchised ethnic groups to gain access to power via individual merit.

Given the extent and far-reaching effects of these upheavals, it is not surprising to discover that Spanish Muslim society in the post-caliphal period was fraught with social tensions. An often overlooked description of the social classes of Muslim Spain during the Ṭāʾifa period found in the ninth/fifteenth-century Moroccan work, *Dhikr mashāhīr Fās fī l-qadīm*,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Although the full text of this work, started in the eighth/fourteenth century and completed soon after the year 880/1475–76, contains the contributions of several authors, it has largely been attributed to the historian Ismāʿīl ibn al-Aḥmar (d. ca. 807/1404) and

reveals an Andalusian society that still displayed numerous vestiges of the earlier ethnically stratified Umayyad social structure. According to the model presented in this text, all significant administrative and military occupations remained exclusively in the hands of Arab immigrants and their descendants. Typically "Arab" occupations in Muslim Spain included religious education down to the primary level, religious leadership, *waqf* administration, and market supervision, or *hisba*.<sup>13</sup>

The Berber population of al-Andalus, on the other hand, tended to occupy exclusively low-status occupations. Those living in rural areas, for example, practiced cattle herding, harvesting, wood collecting, and the preparation of butter, olive oil, honey, wool, and salt. Those living in towns and cities were often engaged in the production of household and farm implements or worked as grain, produce, and water carriers, construction laborers, and lime and plaster preparers.<sup>14</sup>

Those "who had submitted" (*man aslama*) among the former Christian population of Muslim Spain fared little better. In the plains they served as cattle and sheep herders, farmers, and honey gatherers. In the mountains they worked as gardeners and orchard tenders, woodcutters, and charcoal makers. If they lived on the coast they were usually fishermen and boat builders.<sup>15</sup> Converted Jews shared a similar status, although their occupations appear to have been centered in urban areas. These included sewing clothing and fabric, tentmaking, the spinning of trimming and braiding for clothes, hat-making, dyeing, barbering, locksmithing, peddling, selling curdled milk, and shoe repairing.<sup>16</sup>

In the middle of the social spectrum stood the "clients" (*mawālī*), whose status more often than not depended on that of their patrons or their usefulness to the state. These were mainly an urban population who appear to have specialized in handicrafts—weaving, shoemaking, milling, lathing, woodworking, carpentry, saddlery, tailoring, pottery, metalworking, weapons crafting, and coppersmithing. Others served as doctors, musicians, barbers, butchers, caravan agents, and hostel (*funduq*) operators. Clients among the Jews served as owners of public ovens, potters, confec-

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was recently published in Rabat under the title *Buyūtāt Fās al-kubrā* (Rabat: Dār al-Manṣūr, 1972). Despite the late date of its completion, most scholars studying this work have concluded that it represents a fourteenth-century Andalusian's view of his society during the late Umayyad and early Ṭā'ifa eras. See, for example, Maya Schatzmiller, "Professions and Ethnic Origins of Urban Labourers in Muslim Spain: Evidence From a Moroccan Source," *Awraq*, 5-6 (1982-83), p. 154, who believes that the text could not possibly reveal social conditions that existed prior to the tenth century AD.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Aḥmar, *Buyūtāt Fās*, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

tioners, bookbinders, ornamenters of wood, jewelers, pearl stringers, ore smelters, coin minters, and makers of musical instruments.<sup>17</sup>

The stratification of Andalusian society along ethnic lines produced inevitable feelings of resentment that resulted in a long series of Berber revolts against central authority that went back to at least the early third/ninth century, when Aṣḥagh ibn Wansūs (u-Ansūs) rose against al-Ḥakam I (r. 180–206/796–822).<sup>18</sup> This pattern of Berber dissidence was supplemented in the latter part of the same century by a number of neo-Muslim rebellions that broke out during the unrest accompanying the reign of the *amīr* Muḥammad I (r. 238–73/852–86)—the most famous of which was the *shu'ūbī* revolt begun in the mountains of Málaga by 'Umar ibn Ḥafṣūn (d. 306/918).<sup>19</sup>

By the mid-fifth/eleventh century, the gradual assimilation of significant numbers of neo-Muslims and Berbers into Andalusian "Arab" society as a result of clientship, intermarriage, and political accommodation had diffused the ethnic makeup of much of Muslim Spain to the point where the largely endogamous and numerically small group of clans and families that had long monopolized political and religious authority under the Umayyad caliphate began to feel their hold on power threatened by the more pluralistic social and political alignments that were emerging in the newly Arabized southern parts of Andalusia and the Iberian Levant. This perception of intellectual and status competition from peoples who had hitherto been dismissed as nearly illiterate in the Arabic language caused the intellectual and administrative elites of the major cities of Muslim Spain to attempt to fossilize now-outdated models of Umayyad social stratification and artificially perpetuate the continued ethnic polarization of Andalusian society well into the Ṭā'ifa period.<sup>20</sup> In the field of religion this reactionism on the part of the urban elites was expressed as an almost desperate adherence to a tradition-bound and intellectually insular form of pre-Ash'arī theology and Mālikī jurisprudence by legists who, in no uncertain terms, sought to maintain the *status quo ante* by rejecting any attempt to stress the egalitarian nature of Islamic ethics or to make Andalusian theology and jurisprudence conform to developments that had long since become popular in the Muslim East. In practice, this attitude meant that throughout the fifth/eleventh century the juridical and Qur'ānic sciences, already

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25. It is interesting to note that non-converted Jews seem to have enjoyed a higher standard of living than those who became Muslims, indicating that in Muslim Spain conversion and social advancement did not necessarily go hand in hand.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 181.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181–85.

joined in the Mashriq under the influence of the Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence, remained separated from one another. Instead, Andalusian legists, who were concerned solely with the execution of social regulations, relied exclusively on their own body of precedent and tradition, while Qur'ānic scholars and exegetes, their inquiries effectively limited to the fields of philosophy and dogmatic theology, showed little apparent interest in helping to formulate a *sunna*, an undertaking that in any case would have been mitigated by their being denied a significant role in defining the norms of public behavior.<sup>21</sup>

The bridge that ultimately spanned this artificially created gap between the Qur'ānic and the jurisprudential sciences proved to be, as in the Mashriq almost two centuries earlier, the study of *ḥadīth*, the practitioners of which, although traditionally coming from among the ranks of legal scholars, were often descendants of assimilated Berbers and neo-Muslims who had recently begun to penetrate Arab society. Because of their ethnic and social origins, these scholars were more likely than those of purely "Arab" background to be open to the influence of both reformist and socially active forms of Sūfism as well as the Eastern emphasis upon *uṣūl al-dīn*.

The Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence gained its first followers in al-Andalus as early as the reign of Muḥammad I and quickly earned a reputation for the quality of its scholars, despite their small numbers. One of the first to gain widespread notoriety was 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Umawī al-Bushkulārī (d. 461/1068–69), originally from a village near Jaén, who served as the *imām* of a mosque in one of the suburbs of Córdoba.<sup>22</sup> Even more famous was the noted teacher Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Umar ibn al-Dilā'ī (d. 478/1086), a master of *ḥadīth* who studied under the most renowned scholars of Syria, Iraq, and Khurāsān, including Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Rāzī and Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Qazwīnī. Upon returning from the Mashriq Ibn al-Dilā'ī settled in his native Almería, where both the Zāhirī theologian Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) and the famous *muḥaddith* Abū 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) were among his students.<sup>23</sup>

Sharing the interests of the Shāfi'ī jurists in Muslim Spain was a larger body of Mālikī supporters of the doctrine of *uṣūl al-fiqh* who sought to reform their own school of law from within, rather than attempting to replace it outright. A strikingly large percentage of these scholars appear to have adhered to Sūfī doctrines as well. One of the first of these was Aḥmad

<sup>21</sup> Dominique Urvoy, *El mundo de los ulemas Andaluces del siglo V/XI al VII/XIII—estudio sociológico* (Madrid: Ediciones Pégaso, 1983), pp. 55–56.

<sup>22</sup> Abū l-Qāsim Khalaf ibn 'Abd al-Malik ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 578/1183), *Kitāb al-ṣila fī ta'rīkh a'immat al-Andalus*, edited by 'Izzat al-'Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Khānjī, 1374/1955), I, 271.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.



ibn Muḥammad ibn Qarlumān al-Ma'āfirī al-Ṭalamankī (d. 429/1038), who spent his formative years in Córdoba, where he studied under the noted mystic and *muḥaddith* Abū Ja'far ibn 'Awn Allāh (d. late fourth/tenth c.). Later he traveled to the Mashriq and studied in Medina under Abū l-Qāsim al-Jawharī, an Egyptian master whose family was to have long connections with the Nūrīya Ṣūfī tradition. Following his sojourn in the East, al-Ṭalamankī returned to Spain via Ifrīqīya (present-day Tunisia), where he was a student of the famous Mālikī legist Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386/996). A man of firm resolve, he was known as "a drawn sword against the folk of lust and heresy" and taught the principles of *ḥisba* (the correction of deviant behavior) in Córdoba, after which he traveled for a time among the *murābiṭūn* of the Northern Marches and eventually died in Talamanca, the town of his birth, not far from the present city of Madrid.<sup>24</sup>

A contemporary of al-Ṭalamankī and another apparent teacher of both Ṣūfī and Uṣūlī doctrines was Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Ilbīrī al-Uṣūlī (d. 429/1037–38). Called a "theologian of the folk of the *sunna*" (*mutakallim min ahl al-sunna*) by his biographers, Aḥmad al-Ilbīrī originally came from the town of Elvira but lived in Granada, where he was noted as a poet, a philosophically minded theologian, and a respected spokesman for the lower classes. Significantly, he was one of the first to introduce the *Al-Ri'āya li-ḥuqūq Allāh* of al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) into Muslim Spain.<sup>25</sup>

Ash'arī theology first began to enter and eventually merge with the Andalusian Uṣūlī tradition under the influence of the Moroccan legist Abū 'Imrān al-Fāsī (d. 430/1039). Like their Moroccan contemporaries, al-Fāsī's Andalusian pupils appear to have mixed their studies of theology and jurisprudence with a strong dose of ascetic and moralistic Ṣūfism and the politics of social reform, a combination not inconsistent with the doctrines espoused by al-Muḥāsibī, whose works had by now become popular through the influence of Aḥmad al-Ilbīrī and others. The most famous member of this "African" group was Muḥammad ibn Sa'dūn al-Qarawī (or al-Qayrawānī), who died in Morocco at Aghmāt, south of the present city of Marrakesh, in the year 485/1092. A native of Ifrīqīya who studied Ṣūfism in Mecca under the shaykh Abū Bakr al-Maṭū'ī, Muḥammad ibn Sa'dūn was known primarily for his attempt to reform Mālikī doctrine by harmonizing the study of both the fundamentals and the branches of jurisprudence. Having taught in Córdoba, Valencia, and Almería, he was instrumental in

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48. See also Urvoy, *Ulemas Andaluces*, pp. 127, 153. Aḥmad al-Ilbīrī's populism also induced him to instigate at least one pogrom against the Jews of Granada.

disseminating both Ash'arī theology and Uṣūlī doctrine in the Andalusian Levant.<sup>26</sup>

During the latter part of the fifth and sixth/eleventh and twelfth centuries a new theological and juridical consensus (*ijmā'*) was thus beginning to form in both al-Andalus and North Africa that was largely based on the contributions of Uṣūlī and Ash'arī scholars and actively supported by most Ṣūfis, who—perhaps as a result of the reaction of Sunnī religious scholars against Bāṭinī doctrines, such as those of the Fāṭimids—by now preferred to use *ḥadīth*-based rather than philosophical justifications for their beliefs. In the case of Muslim Spain the development of this new consensus paralleled the increasing urbanization, pluralization, and political atomization of Andalusian society that followed the breakup of the Umayyad caliphate. During this era the decline of Córdoba and the growing intellectual prestige of the larger Ṭā'ifa states enabled Seville to supplant the former capital as a center for the study of the Qur'ān and *fiqh*, followed shortly thereafter by the cities of the Iberian Levant (especially Valencia and Almería), which in turn became centers for the study of Ṣūfism and *ḥadīth*. The increased interest by Andalusian *ḥadīth* scholars in the formulation of a behavioral *sunna* based both on the Prophetic example and on the precedent set by the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ* led to an intensified interest in the ascetic and pietistic norms of behavior advocated by the first generation of Muslims. This rediscovery of what was thought to be the world-denying simplicity of pristine Islam allowed many exoteric theologians and jurists in Muslim Spain to strike a doctrinal compromise with the adherents of Ṣūfī and other ascetic traditions. This compromise, in turn, stimulated the creation of an ascetic, action-oriented, socially conscious, and *shar'ī* form of Ṣūfism that was largely reminiscent of contemporary, "orthodox" mystical trends in the Muslim East. The new mystical tradition that resulted from these developments was—in the Maghrib at least—primarily influenced by the introduction of al-Ghazālī's encyclopedic *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*.

Al-Andalus could boast of at least three pupils of the famous *Hujjat al-Islām*. The first, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī l-Rajā' al-Balawī al-Labassī (d. 545/1150–51), was a Ṣūfī and reciter of the Qur'ān who began his career as a graduate of the school of reformist mysticism founded by Aḥmad al-Ilbīrī in Granada. He studied under al-Ghazālī in the year 497/1103–1104 and later served as an influential leader of Friday prayers in the great mosque of Almería between the years 505/1111–12 and 541/1146–47.<sup>27</sup> The second

<sup>26</sup>Urvoy, *Ulemas Andaluces*, pp. 125, 127 n. 113. See also al-Tādilī, *Tashawwuf*, pp. 61–62.

<sup>27</sup>Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Abbār al-Balansī (d. 658/1260), *Kitāb al-takmilā li-kitāb al-ṣila*, edited by Francisco Codera (Madrid: Joseph de Rojas, 1887), p. 563.

of these scholars, ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Kinānī, called Ibn Ḥusayn al-Ṭulayṭulī (d. 549/1154–55), was a refugee from Christian-occupied Toledo who spent most of his career in Córdoba, after which he ended his days in the city of Fez.<sup>28</sup> The third, the noted Mālikī legist and *qāḍī* of Seville, Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ma‘āfirī (d. 543/1148), who is best known today for introducing the works of al-Ghazālī’s teacher al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) to the western Maghrib, also died in Fez.

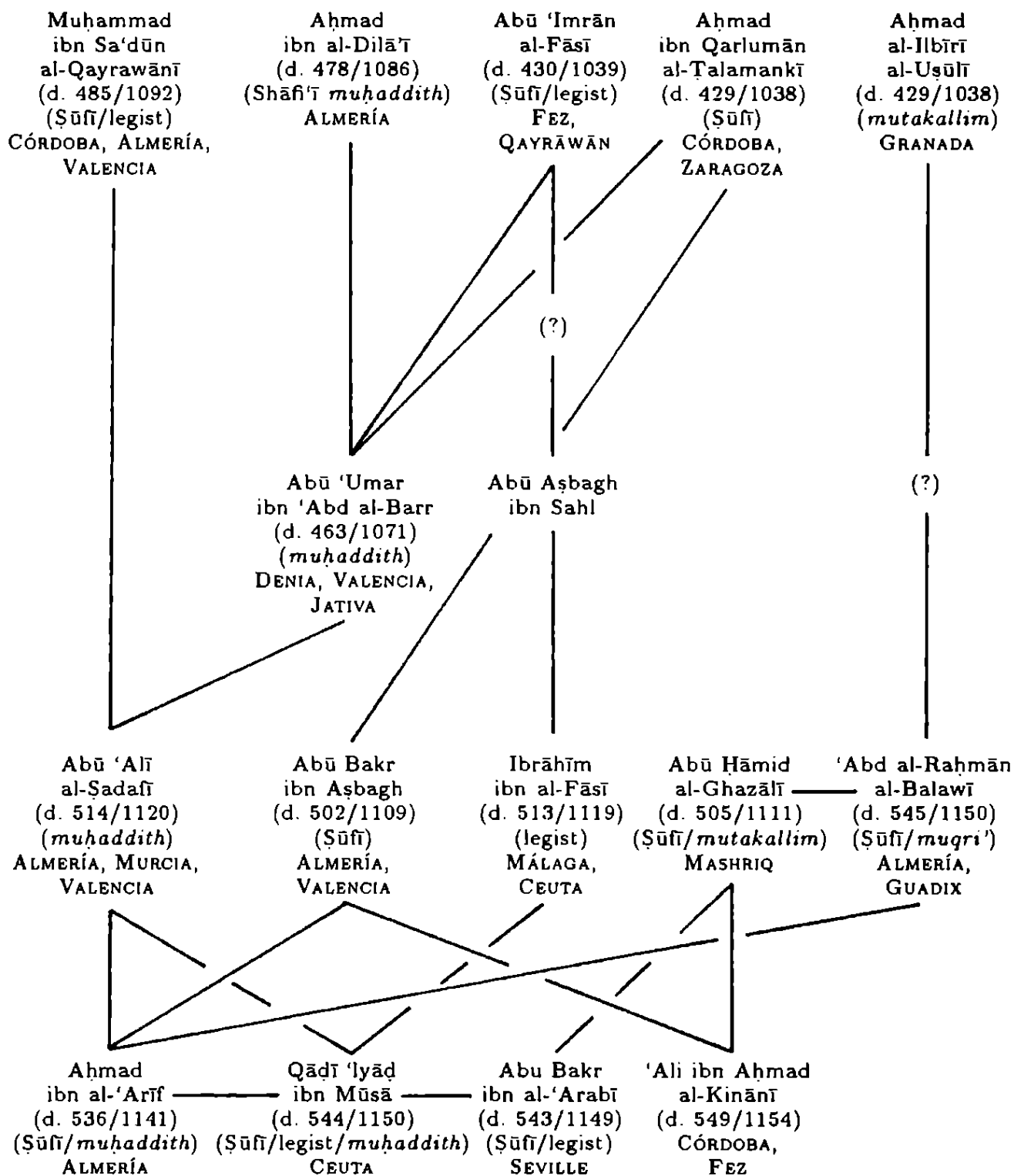
The chart below depicts some of the connections between Ash‘arī theologians, Uṣūlī scholars, and Ṣūfis in Islamic Spain during the Ṭā’ifa and Murābiṭ eras. The first conclusion to be drawn from this chart is that, as mentioned above, the *muḥaddithūn* among the ‘*ulamā*’ appear to have been extremely influential in the creation of an Andalusian “orthodox” or *shar‘ī* Ṣūfī tradition. Furthermore, as the importance of Abū ‘Imrān al-Fāsī and Muḥammad ibn Sa’dūn al-Qayrawānī attests, the transmission of knowledge across the Strait of Gibraltar was not one-way, from north to south, as has often been supposed, but was instead bidirectional—a clear indication of the existence of long-established, reciprocal intellectual ties between the Iberian peninsula and the “other side” (*al-‘udwa*) of the Mediterranean.

The importance of North Africa to Andalusian intellectual life is also reflected in an apparent concentration of Ash‘arī and Uṣūlī scholars in the southern and eastern portions of the peninsula—in cities like Granada, Málaga, Valencia, Almería, Guadix, and Murcia, which were not far from the major sea routes to Morocco and Ifrīqīya. Most importantly, perhaps, the data in this chart present an alternative viewpoint to that advanced by the Spanish orientalist Miguel Asín Palacios, who on the basis of highly fragmentary and circumstantial evidence assumed that Andalusian Ṣūfism had little to do with the formal Islamic sciences and was instead a direct heir to the doctrines of an imagined neo-Empedoclean mystical tradition.<sup>29</sup> For the time being, it is sufficient simply to add an obvious point to the historical data given above—that the mere use of apparent Neoplatonic models does not necessarily make a given Andalusian mystic a neo-Empedoclean, especially one who lived, like Ibn Ṭufayl and his contemporaries, in the age of Ibn Sīna (d. 428/1037), whose philosophy quickly proliferated throughout the entirety of the Muslim world, even among jurisprudential scholars and dogmatic theologians.

<sup>28</sup>Urvoy, *Ulemas Andaluces*, p. 216 n. 57.

<sup>29</sup>Miguel Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra and His Followers*, translated by Elmer H. Douglas and Howard W. Yoder (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), pp. 120–23. This point of view, even concerning Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931) himself, was challenged as early as 1968 by the late Samuel Stern. See S.M. Stern, “Ibn Masarra, Follower of Pseudo-Empedocles—An Illusion,” in his *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought*, edited by F.W. Zimmermann (London: Variorum, 1983), pp. 325–37.

## ASH'ARĪ-UṢŪLĪ-ṢŪFĪ RELATIONSHIPS IN MUSLIM SPAIN



*Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn al-ʿArīf*

One of the most noted exemplars of the newly developing *sharʿī* Ṣūfī tradition in Muslim Spain was Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣanhājī, known to posterity as Ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 536/1141). The son of a Berber soldier from Tangier in northern Morocco, this future Ṣūfī master, Qurʾān reciter, and *muḥaddith* grew up, apparently like Ibn Ṭufayl himself, in the Ṭāʾifa state of Almería in the southeastern part of the Iberian peninsula, where his father was an officer (*ʿarīf*) of the night watch. All of his biographers agree that the young Aḥmad ibn al-ʿArīf was a prodigy in the fields of Islamic learning, especially those of *qirāʾa* and *ḥadīth* transmission, which he studied as a prize pupil of the doyen of *ḥadīth* studies in the Andalusian Levant, the neo-Muslim *imām* Abū ʿAlī Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Fierro al-Ṣadaḥī (d. 514/1120).<sup>30</sup> It was, indeed, as a reciter of the Qurʾān and transmitter of *ḥadīth* that the future Ṣūfī shaykh was best known to his Andalusian contemporaries. The biographer Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 578/1183), for example, makes no mention at all of Ibn al-ʿArīf's mystical proclivities, saying only that those who were pious (*al-ʿubbād*) and ascetic (*al-zuhhād*) would flock to hear his lectures.<sup>31</sup>

Biographical sources also tell us that at a relatively early age Ibn al-ʿArīf began to teach the recitation of the Qurʾān, first in his native Almería and later at Zaragoza, after which he was appointed Inspector of Markets (*wālī l-ḥisba*) for the city of Valencia. During this period as well, he began to be known for his expressive talents and mastery of the art of calligraphy.<sup>32</sup> Some time after this official appointment, the future shaykh was converted to a belief in the systematic practice of asceticism (*zuhd*), scrupulousness (*waraʿ*), and altruism (*ithār*), for which he was to become both famous and persecuted toward the end of his life.

The fact that Ibn al-ʿArīf's practice of *ithār* may also have been linked to populist political dissidence is corroborated by a number of sources. We know, for example, that throughout his life the shaykh maintained a solicitous concern for the poor and enjoyed the often fanatical allegiance of large numbers of pious ascetics who, in a manner reminiscent of the activities of the Ṣūfī *fityān* of Khurāsān and other parts of the Muslim East, were later involved in open rebellion against the Murābiṭ state. It is known as well that the followers of Ibn al-ʿArīf whose names have come down to us included an apparently disproportionate number of individuals of either Berber or neo-Muslim origin—a reflection, perhaps, of the pluralistic na-

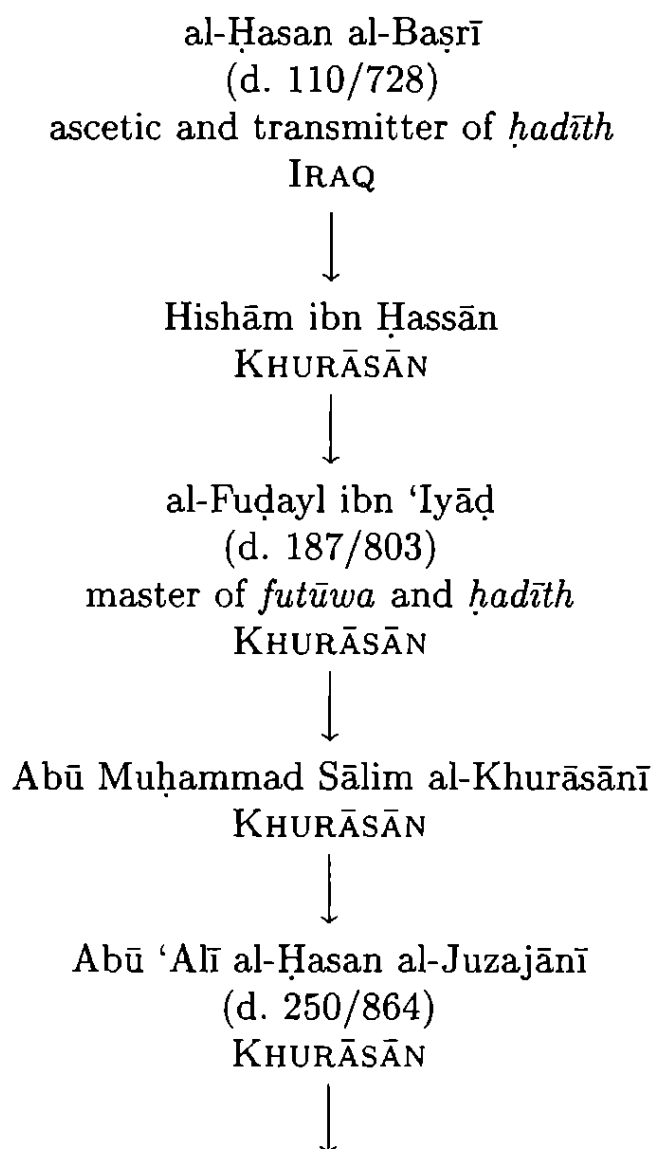
<sup>30</sup> Ibn al-Abbār, *Al-Muʿjam fī aṣḥāb al-qāḍī al-imām Abī ʿAlī al-Ṣadaḥī* (Cairo: Dār al-kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1387/1967), pp. 15–17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila*, p. 52.

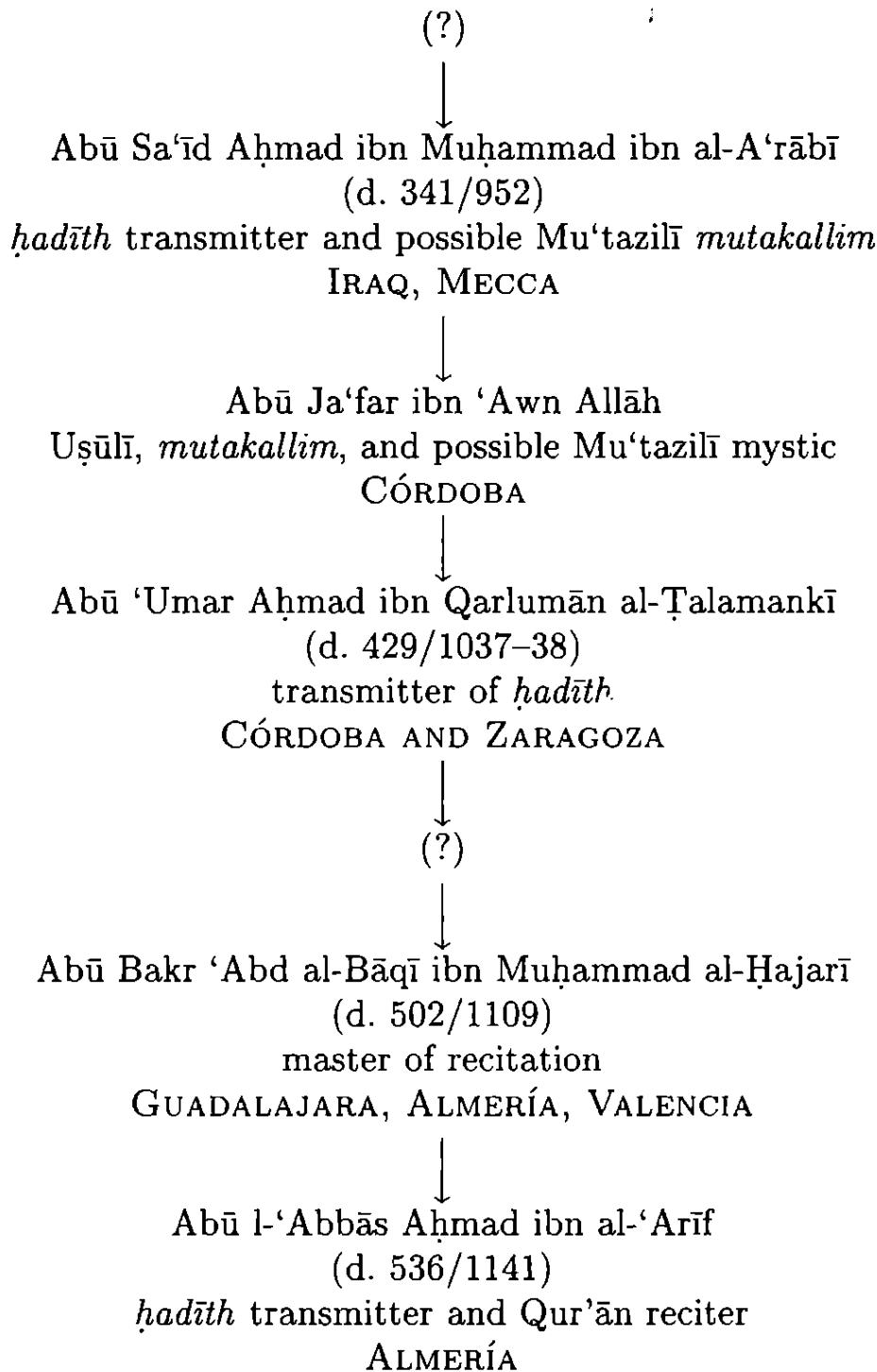
<sup>32</sup> Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Iʿlām*, II, 6–7.

ture of society in the Andalusian Levant, but more likely an indication that the shaykh chose to identify himself with the most disadvantaged ethnic groups in Spanish Muslim society. The further fact that Ibn al-‘Arīf was noted for writing poems that expressed strong pride in his Berber origins lends further credibility to this latter claim.

The intellectual *silsila* of Ibn al-‘Arīf, one of the few that has survived relatively intact from this early period of Maghribī Ṣūfism, is instructive in tracing the doctrinal antecedents of the Andalusian *shar‘ī* mystical tradition:<sup>33</sup>



<sup>33</sup>This *silsila*, still partially incomplete, was compiled from data found in Muḥammad al-‘Arabī ibn al-Shaykh Abī Maḥāsīn Yūsuf al-Fāsī (wr. 1046/1636) *Mir’āt al-maḥāsīn fī akhbār al-shaykh Abī Maḥāsīn* (Fez: lithograph, 1316/1898–99), p. 202; Ibn Ibrāhīm, *I’lām*, II, 19; Miguel Cruz Hernández, *Historia del pensamiento en el mundo islámico* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1981), II, 18–19.



It should by now come as no surprise that the most common specialty of the individuals mentioned in Ibn al-'Arīf's *silsila* is that of *ḥadīth* transmitter, followed secondarily by that of dogmatic theologian. Both of these disciplines meet in the figure of Abū Sa'īd Aḥmad ibn al-A'rābī of al-Baṣra (d. 341/952), who was a disciple of both al-Junayd (d. 298/910) and his friend Abū l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī, and held the important position of *shaykh al-ḥaram* at Mecca.<sup>34</sup> The great magnet of the pilgrimage to Mecca drew

<sup>34</sup> Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021-22), *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfīya*, edited by Nūr al-Dīn Shurayba (Cairo: Dār al-kitāb al-'arabī, 1372/1953), p. 427.

scholars and ascetics from throughout the Islamic world—of these several were Andalusians—to the lectures of this influential shaykh. Among them were the so-called “neo-Empedoclean” Ibn Masarra (d. 319/931) and the noted legist and theologian Abū ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aṣḥab (d. 327/939), whose combination of Mu‘tazilī theology and Mālikī jurisprudence was to influence the doctrines of later Andalusian and North African reformers like Muḥammad ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130), the spiritual founder and leader of the Muwaḥḥid movement.

Other figures of note in this *silsila* include the highly influential late fourth/tenth-century Ṣūfī of Córdoba, Abū Ja‘far ibn ‘Awn Allāh, who, anticipating the doctrine taught by Ibn al-‘Arīf more than a century later, urged his students to fear God, to make invocation (*dhikr*) obligatory, and to practice withdrawal (*‘uzla*) from human society.<sup>35</sup> Worthy of mention as well is Ibn al-‘Arīf’s own *shaykh al-khirqa*, Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Bāqī ibn Aṣḥab ibn Birriyāl (Virreal?), a man of apparently neo-Muslim background whose family seems to have adopted a fictitious Anṣārī lineage. Originally from the city of Guadalajara, Ibn Aṣḥab spent most of his career in Almería, where he was noted as a poet and master of oral traditions. Eventually leaving Almería for what may have been political reasons, he died in Valencia in 502/1109.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from a background in *ḥadīth* and oral transmission shared by most of Ibn al-‘Arīf’s antecedents, this *silsila* is notable for its reflection of an apparent interest in Islamic chivalry, or *futūwa*. Al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād ibn Bishr al-Tamīmī (d. 187/803), who occupies a position of prominence in Figure 2, is quoted at length by the biographer al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021–22) in his *Kitāb al-futūwa*, while Khurāsān, the birthplace not only of al-Fuḍayl, but also of Abū Muḥammad Sālim al-Khurāsānī and Abū ‘Alī al-Juzajānī (d. 250/864), was long known as an important center of this often lower-class and populist intellectual movement.<sup>37</sup>

What is not apparent among the individuals mentioned in this *silsila* is any overt preference for *falsafa*—something that would seem to be essential if, as Asín Palacios believed, Ibn al-‘Arīf and most other Ṣūfīs in al-Andalus had indeed inherited elements of a neo-Empedoclean tradition. Even more important for the purposes of the present discussion, the lack of any known follower of the philosophers of either the Greco-Roman period or Late Antiquity among the intellectual ancestors of the shaykh of Almería indicates quite clearly that Ibn al-‘Arīf (the Ṣūfī and *muḥaddith*) and Ibn Ṭufayl (the “Ṣūfī” and *faylasūf*) belonged to divergent esoteric traditions. The

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Ṣila*, pp. 216–17.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 366–67.

<sup>37</sup> See Franz Taeschner, “As-Sulamī’s Kitāb al-Futuwwa,” in *Studia orientalia Ioanni Pedersen septuagenario . . . dicata* (Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1953), pp. 340–51.



difference between the two becomes even more apparent when it is discovered that in a unique doctrinal manuscript entitled *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, Ibn al-'Arīf specifically mentions *falsafa* as a "blameworthy method" (*madhhab madhmūm*) and adds, in a passage reminiscent of al-Ghazālī's later works:

Philosophy and philosophers have appeared, and [with them] has spread conjectural religion (*al-dīn al-wahmī*), which one might believe to be the religion of the Truth, although it is not. In this way the attitudes of many people toward philosophy and philosophers have improved. But if they instead take guidance from that which establishes the Reality of knowledge—by adhering to the Prophets, recognizing the laws and sciences they have brought, and believing that they are the most knowledgeable of men and [act as] signs (*āyāt*) of God pointing to that which is the beginning and the end—both faith and those with faith will [again] appear.<sup>38</sup>

Up to the present, the little that has been written about Ibn al-'Arīf's spiritual method has been based exclusively on passages found in the work most commonly attributed to him, *Maḥāsin al-majālis*, first published in edited form by Asín Palacios in 1933.<sup>39</sup> This small treatise, apparently written for those members of the shaykh's *ṭā'ifa* who had advanced beyond the beginning stages of their spiritual journey, is unusually similar to a number of more well-known works from the Eastern Sūfī tradition, such as the Plotinian *Mawāqif* and *Mukhāṭabāt* of Muḥammad al-Niffārī (d. 354/965).<sup>40</sup> As such, its publication has done nothing to dispel the erroneous assumption that all of Andalusian Sūfism was heavily philosophical in character. There can, of course, be no doubt that the Sūfī concept of gnosis, wherever it is to be found, shares a number of modes of expression with Neoplatonism, especially since it has always claimed to be a restricted teaching and shares with other esoteric doctrines, such as Taoism and Zen Buddhism, some of the same difficulties in expressing ineffabilities within the confines of human speech.<sup>41</sup> The danger brought to light by the discov-

<sup>38</sup>Ibn al-'Arīf, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda wa-taḥqīq ṭarīq al-irāda*, Bibliothèque royale (Rabat) [Al-Khizāna al-ḥasanīya], MS 1562, p. 41. The text of this manuscript is numbered partly in folios and partly in pages.

<sup>39</sup>See Ibn al-'Arīf, *Maḥāsin al-majālis*, edited by Miguel Asín Palacios (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1933). A rather hasty and inaccurate English translation of this work has also appeared under the title *Maḥāsin al-Majālis: the Attraction of Mystical Sessions*, translated by William Elliot and Adnan K. Abdullah (Amersham, England: Avebury, 1980).

<sup>40</sup>See Arthur John Arberry, *The Mawāqif and Mukhāṭabāt of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdīl-Jabbār Al-Niffārī* (Cambridge: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, repr. 1978).

<sup>41</sup>On such difficulties, as viewed in medieval Islam generally and considered by Ibn Ṭufayl in particular, see J.C. Bürgel's contribution to this volume, pp. 114–32 above.

ery of the manuscript of *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, however, lies in assuming that the apparent borrowing of Neoplatonic symbols or expressive devices necessarily means the wholesale adoption of the apodictic philosophical method. One is clearly justified, of course, in making such an assumption about Ibn Ṭufayl, who, according to al-Marrākushī, specifically set out to reconcile the traditions of *falsafa*, *nubūwa*, and *sharī'a*. In the case of Ibn al-'Arīf, however, who condemned *falsafa* as error and misguidance, one would do a great disservice by calling him a "philosopher" just because he apparently agreed with some of the concepts of Plotinian metaphysics.

Despite their clear difference of opinion over the nature of *falsafa*, both Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn al-'Arīf nonetheless appear to have shared a similarly rationalistic outlook on both religion and the human condition in general. For the Berber shaykh from Almería the soul's quest for spiritual knowledge was called the "Path of the Will" (*ṭarīq al-irāda*), which, like all aspects of human existence, had an inner (*bāṭinī*), and an outer (*ẓāhirī*) aspect. The outer aspect of will he expressed in *Maḥāsin al-majālis* as the "adornment of the masses" (*ḥilyat al-'awwām*). In practice this meant "to devote one's purpose exclusively toward God, to make one's intention resolute, and to strive in seeking Him"<sup>42</sup>—a quest undertaken by both Ḥayy and Absāl in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. For Ibn al-'Arīf, however, who implicitly contradicts the spiritual method followed by Ibn Ṭufayl's protagonist, this personal, ego-centered sense of will is but a delusion, for the goals of the Path, "union (*jam'*) and eternal presence (*wujūd*—literally, "finding" God) are in what is willed (*yurād*) for the slave by God, not in what [the slave] wills (*yurīd*)."<sup>43</sup>

Ibn al-'Arīf would, however, probably have agreed with Ibn Ṭufayl that the Way to the Real rests on the twin foundations of knowledge (*'ilm*) and practice (*'amal*)—complementary terms that, in their essence, mean nothing less than the integration of the totality of the enlightened soul's living moments within an all-encompassing spirituality. Indeed, this point of view is expressed by the shaykh in a way strongly reminiscent of the method later followed by the fictional character Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān:

The starting point for all good is knowledge. As for knowledge itself, the keys to it are questions, and questions are not properly posed without knowledge of the implications (*ḥaqā'iq*) of the question. [Thus], since proper conduct is based upon [knowledge], the intention of the Folk of the Realities (*ahl al-ḥaqā'iq*) is that the slave not perform or initiate a single act, even when pressured to do so, except as the result of certain knowledge, in order that all of his behavior be in accordance with a manifest or

<sup>42</sup> Ibn al-'Arīf, *Maḥāsin al-majālis*, p. 76.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

hidden spiritual Truth. . . . So one who correctly states the question (*man taḥaqqqa al-su'āl*) arrives at knowledge (*'ilm*), one who arrives at knowledge. . . arrives at proper conduct (*'amal*), and one who arrives at proper conduct by means of the Reality of Knowledge finds himself on the Path of Will. The Way of Realization in [the Path of] Will is that the seeker take hold of his carnal soul in the firmest and strongest manner possible, according to the words of God, "[Those who] listen to the [Divine] Speech and follow the good in it."<sup>44</sup>

The knowledge required for a traveler on the Path of Will—again in general accord with the point of view advanced by Ibn Ṭufayl—is of four kinds: knowledge of the tongue, knowledge of the rational faculty or intellect (*'aql*), the intuitive knowledge of the rightly guided heart, and the gnostic knowledge that arises from the divinely illuminated Inner Self (*al-'ilm fī l-sirr*).<sup>45</sup> Before one can attain this final stage of knowledge, however, the seeker must avoid a number of dangerous pitfalls:

1. Analogy (*qiyās*) that causes a seeker to deviate from either the true nature of things or the fundamental principles upon which religion is founded. This is a warning against unrestrained philosophical and juridical speculations.
2. The acquisition of intellectual hypocrisy, or an outward personality that is inconsistent and in conflict with one's inner characteristics.
3. Imitation (*taqlīd*) of others following the usage of the ignorant. This statement represents a rejection of both the theological and juridical doctrines of conservative, non-Uṣūlī, Mālikī scholars and of Ṣūfīs who seduce the masses with extravagant claims of gnosis.
4. Philosophical justifications (*al-maṣlahāt al-falsafīya*), the supports and final goals of which are grounded in [the principle of] harmony with the material world (*al-salāma al-dunyāwīya*)—a clear statement of opposition to Greek natural philosophy, which would put the shaykh in sharp disagreement with some of Ibn Ṭufayl's beliefs.
5. [Vain] esoteric explanations (*al-ta'wīl al-bāṭinī*)—a warning aimed both at Ṣūfī charlatans and those who still believed in Fāṭimid doctrines.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn al-'Arīf, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, fols. 13–14. The Qur'ānic quotation is from Sūrat al-'Ankabūt (29), v. 18.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

6. The affectation of knowledge (*riyā'*), or the application of either knowledge or spiritual practice before understanding what is required of it.
7. Being a spiritual dilettante (*mutalā'ib*).
8. Precipitousness (*'ajala*), or satisfaction with the first teaching that one encounters without regard for its final outcome or ultimate benefit.
9. Retardation (*ibtā'*), or the attempt to increase one's worldly position by correcting one's actions and giving preponderance to the guidance of exoteric sciences.<sup>46</sup>

Fundamental to avoiding these pitfalls is one's adherence to a behavioral method based on the practice of asceticism and *tawakkul*, or absolute trust in the Will of God. This pair of complementary spiritual attitudes is also conceived of by Ibn al-'Arīf as representing inner and outer aspects of the same reality:

Asceticism in reality means directing the desires of the heart toward God, attaching one's aspirations to Him, and busying oneself with Him to the exclusion of all else, so that He alone is the fulfillment of all your needs. You must be with Him like a month-old child with its mother; it has neither any will of its own nor any authority with her.<sup>47</sup>

For the person who aspires to such an exalted spiritual state, human society is but a dross that dulls the higher instincts and distracts the seeker from his contemplation. For this reason Ibn al-'Arīf strongly advocated, as did Ibn Ṭufayl and all other major Ṣūfīs of the sixth/twelfth-century Maghrib, the practice of seclusion (*khalwa*) and withdrawal (*'uzla*) from the demands and company of mankind. "For one trained in the discipline of the Truth," writes the shaykh, "the friendship of beasts is more beloved than the friendship of men. He obliges himself to flee and to live in caves and satisfies himself [only] with one who befriends him for the sake of religion alone."<sup>48</sup> Needless to say, a more accurate description of Ḥayy's life on his island in the Indian Ocean and his subsequent relationship with Absāl could hardly be hoped for. In the following poem from *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, the shaykh expresses his attitude toward solitude and withdrawal even more effectively:

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 17.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-'Arīf, *Maḥāsīn al-majālis*, p. 78.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn al-'Arīf, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, pp. 36–37.

The wolf howls, and I draw near to the rabbit,  
 Such that I think a human voice is the wolf's howl and flee.  
 One true in Will must search for [the Truth] in seclusion,  
 For it is [the Truth's] gate, and by means of it [man] regulates  
 his affairs.<sup>49</sup>

The object of this spiritual retreat is not mere loneliness, however, but the invocation and remembrance of God, which for Ibn al-'Arīf comprises not only the recitation of formal Ṣūfī litanies but the constant recitation of the Qur'ān as well. On remembrance in general he states: "The material world is cursed (*mal'ūna*), and everything that is in it is cursed, except for the remembrance of God and the one who seeks refuge in it."<sup>50</sup> This view, although fundamental to fideistic asceticism in most organized religions, is at variance with Ibn Ṭufayl's view of the natural world, in which the Ṣūfī-*faylasūf* saw the material manifestation of Being (more Qur'ānically than Ibn al-'Arīf in this case) as a great "book" through which the aware individual could comprehend the ultimate nature of Transcendent Reality. Ibn al-'Arīf, on the other hand, did not share Ibn Ṭufayl's optimistic sense of human ability, but rather assumed that man unguided would ultimately fall prey to the ontological heresy of considering some aspect of contingent being as absolute. Thus both the practice of remembrance and the recitation of the Qur'ān were seen by the shaykh to serve as a much-needed talisman (*ḥirz*) that both expanded the reciter's awareness and preserved him from harm:

Verily the circle of invocation is one of the gardens of Paradise.  
 [Furthermore], the slave is love, so that whatever he expends  
 within himself is paid back to him. The outcome of the most  
 sincere recitation of the Glorious Book or that which one may  
 memorize from it is the greatest and most exalted protection  
 [from the profanation] of one's sight and hearing.<sup>51</sup>

Taking what can be assumed to be the position of Ibn Ṭufayl's Absāl and rejecting that of Ḥayy, Ibn al-'Arīf next states in unequivocal terms that no spiritual path can properly be completed in pure solitude, nor can an individual gain sure knowledge without the aid of a teacher. Finding such a teacher thus becomes the essential goal of the aspirant in his worldly life, for one's teacher is an individual who is "absolutely trustworthy" (*al-ṣādiq al-muṭlaq*):

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[He] benefits you in every way and in everything he is able, whether it be in your religious life or your worldly life. This attribute is present only in one for whom faith is firmly established and for whom the Realities of Knowledge show him the harmful and beneficial aspects [of the world]. His friendship for you is a vocation, which is not completed except by means of the most extreme sincerity before God. One who has been raised to this level of faith, knowledge, and sanctity has arrived at the Abode of Sanctity and [spiritual] specialization.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, while Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn al-ʿArīf appear to have agreed on many aspects of mystical doctrine, they remained far apart on the question of method. To the Neoplatonic Andalusian philosopher, the Aware Man was by nature free from the weaknesses and perceptual constraints suffered by ordinary human beings. This was because his reasoning faculty—sharply honed and, in the case of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, unaffected by the experience of human society—remained constantly open to the illuminating guidance of the Truth. If one were to feel the need to base this attitude on a Qurʾānic model, a philosopher espousing such a doctrine would most likely use the example of al-Khiḍr, that enigmatic figure who was not a prophet and yet something more than a prophet in that he showed Moses esoteric truths that the Lawgiver himself was unable to perceive.<sup>53</sup> From the corpus of Ṣūfī hagiography one could also take the equally enigmatic Uways al-Qaranī, the shepherd from Yemen who was able to conceive of the Prophet Muḥammad and his message even though he had never been anywhere near Mecca or Medina. For strict practitioners of Andalusian *sharʿī* Ṣūfism, however, who based their method on a more cynical and behavioristic model of the material world, there would be no question of exalting an apparently naive Aware Man (Ḥayy) over the careful and ascetically disciplined invoker of God (Absāl). Had Ibn al-ʿArīf been able to see the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* before his death, he would undoubtedly have said that Ibn Ṭufayl's conceit in assuming that his protagonist could attain gnosis without the aid of a spiritual guide was pure fantasy, and that Absāl, in following a religiously grounded spiritual path and seeking a teacher aware of the vicissitudes and seductiveness of the material world, was the more practical and hence the more enlightened of the two.

Even though the weight of available evidence on the origins of Andalusian Ṣūfism indicates that the way to enlightenment advocated by Ibn

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> It is perhaps more than coincidental that a discussion of the role of al-Khiḍr figures prominently in the introduction to al-Tādilī's *Kitāb al-tashawwuf*, since the shaykh of al-Tādilī's shaykh was none other than Ibn Ṭufayl himself.

Ṭufayl diverged in many respects from the beliefs of most of his Ṣūfī contemporaries, a tantalizing possibility nonetheless remains that the solitary method practiced by his protagonist represented a local tradition that was unique to Wādī Āsh and its environs. Circumstantial evidence for such a possibility is indeed provided by the text of *Tuḥfat al-muḡhtarib bi-bilād al-Maḡhrib*, a *riḥla*, or travel mémoire, dedicated to the memory of Shaykh Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik al-Yuḥānisī (d. 667/1268-69), who was honored as the paramount Ṣūfī shaykh of the region of Wādī Āsh some sixty years after the death of Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>54</sup> In this work we find that Shaykh Abū Marwān, although he later claimed allegiance to a Moroccan Ṣūfī *tā’ifa*, started his spiritual quest without the guidance of a shaykh and even claimed that such a solitary spiritual method was in accord with the method laid down centuries before by the great shaykh of Baghdad, al-Junayd.<sup>55</sup> When asked how he could follow such a solitary spiritual method the shaykh replied:

God maintains Himself within me as a shaykh . . . . When a matter draws my attention I look into myself and two thoughts occur to me—one blameworthy and one praiseworthy. I avoid that which is blameworthy and adhere to that which is praiseworthy. When I arrive at the nearest inhabited land I ask for one of its shaykhs or ‘*ulamā*’, inquire of him about it, and he invariably tells me that what appeared to be praiseworthy is indeed praiseworthy and what appeared to be blameworthy is indeed blameworthy. Then I praise God for showing me His Favor.<sup>56</sup>

During the course of travels that took him as far afield as Khurāsān, Shaykh Abū Marwān maintained a severe asceticism and closeness to nature very reminiscent of practices attributed to Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, including the wearing of hair shirts, eating no more than once every three days, and making vows to eat no bread (for eight years), drink no water (for nine years), and to eat only fodder from the earth.<sup>57</sup> Equally significant is Abū Marwān al-Yuḥānisī’s occasional reference to the mysterious al-Khiḍr, an indication that his way may indeed have had something in common with that followed by both Ibn Ṭufayl and the Moroccan biographer al-Tādilī.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Azdī al-Qashtālī, *Tuḥfat al-muḡhtarib bi-bilād al-Maḡhrib li-man lahu min al-ikhwān fī karāmāt al-Shaykh Abī Marwān*, edited by Fernando de la Granja (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos, 1974).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 61.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

*Ibn Ṭufayl and the Moroccan Illuminationist Tradition*

Before ending our discussion of the relationship between the ideas of Ibn Ṭufayl and those of his Maghribī Ṣūfī contemporaries, it is necessary to address the existence of a truly *ishrāqī* strand of Ṣūfī thought in the Maghrib that paralleled and often entwined itself with the more majoritarian tradition of *sharʿī* asceticism represented by the followers of al-Ghazālī and mystically oriented Andalusian *ḥadīth* scholars and theologians like Ibn al-ʿArīf.<sup>59</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl himself intimates, in his introduction to *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, that speculative doctrines of this type had never been very popular in his native al-Andalus.<sup>60</sup> They could, however, be found as part of a vital and relatively long-lasting tradition across the Strait of Gibraltar in Morocco, where illuminationist doctrines had persisted for more than a century as part of the teachings of a number of rural *awliyāʾ*. Given this fact, it is probably most significant that Ibn Ṭufayl, according to the biographer al-Tādilī, embraced Ṣūfism only after he had moved to Marrakesh, for the mystical tradition in the western part of North Africa had by then far exceeded its counterpart in al-Andalus in its liberal metaphysical outlook and in its uninhibited integration of various theological and philosophical points of view.

Apart from the Ghazālīan *zāwiya* headed by Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ḥirzīhim, or “Sīdī Ḥarāzim” (d. 559/1162), the noted shaykh and socio-political reformer of the city of Fez, the only identifiable Ṣūfī doctrinal tradition of sixth/twelfth-century Morocco that had clearly established Eastern connections was that of the Nūrīya, which traced its spiritual lineage back to Abū l-Ḥasan (or Abū l-Ḥusayn) Aḥmad al-Nūrī (“the Light-Giver”) al-Khurāsānī (d. 295/907–908), a companion of al-Junayd and disciple of the latter’s uncle al-Sarī al-Saqatī (d. 257/870). The first members of this *ṭāʾifa* to appear in Moroccan hagiographical sources are the black *walī* Abū Jabal Yaʿlā of Fez (d. 503/1109–10) and the noted shaykh and “patron” of the town of Aghmāt, ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Wayḥlān al-Dukkālī (d. 541/1146). Both of these individuals were disciples of an Egyptian shaykh, Abū l-Faḍl ʿAbd Allāh ibn Bishr al-Jawharī, who was linked to the Nūrīya through his father and Abū Bakr al-Dinawārī, a disciple of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī himself.<sup>61</sup>

The true father of the Nūrīya tradition in Morocco appears to have been ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Wayḥlān. True to al-Nūrī’s own advocacy of absolute

<sup>59</sup>The term *ishrāqī* is used here only to mean “illuminationist” in the most general sense, and implies no connection with the teachings of Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (d. 587/1191).

<sup>60</sup>See, for example, Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 11, where he discusses the lack of appreciation for Ibn Sīnā’s doctrines in al-Andalus.

<sup>61</sup>Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Iʿlām*, VIII, 32. See also E. Michaux-Bellaire, “Les confréries religieuses au Maroc,” *Archives marocaines*, 27 (1927), p. 40.



sincerity, poverty, self-sacrifice, and self-abnegation, this shaykh lived in extreme poverty at Aghmāt and, much like his *sharʿī* Ṣūfī contemporaries, taught the fundamentals of Mālikī jurisprudence to all who came to him without asking for remuneration. Eventually Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jalīl’s poverty and asceticism became so severe that he was forced to divorce his wife. Realizing that he was obliged to provide her with a settlement, he took the garment he was wearing, which was his only possession, gave her half and kept the other half for himself.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the fact that he was trained as a legist, ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Wayḥlān’s interaction with other legal scholars appears to have been both uneasy and confrontational. When visiting a “bearer of the Law” (*ḥamalat al-fiqh*) he was known to say: “Come. We will take knowledge from fire.”<sup>63</sup> Much of the disapproval to which he was subjected by other jurists was due to the fact that the shaykh was idolized by the population of Aghmāt. It is said that because of his popularity Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jalīl would remain in his house next to the congregational mosque and go out only for the Friday prayer. Upon leaving the mosque, so many people would throng around him, presenting petitions and trying to touch his clothes for blessings, that he would not be able to arrive home until the muezzin had called the afternoon prayer.<sup>64</sup> Like other noted Ṣūfī legists in Morocco, ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Wayḥlān was considered one of the “supports of the Earth” (*awṭād al-arḍ*) by the people of Aghmāt, which meant that he was often called upon to mediate local disputes and perform the function of unofficial community ombudsman, representing the *vox populi* before the governor of the city, who was an outsider appointed from Marrakesh. The last and perhaps most important occasion in which he exercised this role was shortly before his death in 541/1146, when he saved the town from being sacked by billeted Muwaḥḥid troops.

The idea of divinely inspired wisdom implicit in the doctrines of the original Nūrīya *ṭāʾifa* must have elicited a strong cultural response from the Maṣmūda Berbers who inhabited the Atlantic coastal plains of Morocco, for we find that all of the prominent Moroccan shaykhs who followed this tradition until the end of the sixth/twelfth century originally came, like ʿAbd al-Jalīl himself, from the region of Dukkāla, which lies roughly between the present-day cities of Casablanca and Āsafī (Safi). Two of these individuals, Abū Innūr (“the Possessor of Light”) ʿAbd Allāh u-Agrīs al-Mashanzāʾī (d. first half of the sixth/twelfth century) and Abū Shuʿayb Ayyūb ibn Saʿīd al-Ṣanhājī (d. 561/1166), remain today among the most venerated *awliyāʾ* of Morocco. Abū Shuʿayb, now known as “Mūlay Būshʿayb,” patron of the

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Iʿlām*, VIII, 30.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

town of Āzammūr, was particularly noted during his lifetime for integrating the indigenous rural traditions of Maṣmūda and Ṣanhāja Berber mysticism into the framework of Nūrīya Ṣūfī doctrine.

By far the most famous adherent of the Nūrīya tradition in the western Maghrib was an apparently illiterate and monolingual Berber saint who went by the name of Abū Ya'zā Yalannūr (also "the Possessor of Light") ibn Maymūn al-Dukkālī (d. 572/1177). Even before his death at nearly 130 years of age, the image of this remarkable individual, known today as "Mūlay Bū'azzā," had passed so far into the world of popular folklore that even accounts roughly contemporaneous with Abū Ya'zā's own lifetime exhibit the standardized features and symbolic language more usually associated with oral traditions written down much later. Despite the shaykh's illiteracy and rural background, however, he was quite capable of evocatively expressing Ṣūfī doctrine in his own Berber dialect, which would then be translated by a private interpreter for those Arabic speakers, mostly from the city of Fez, who came to hear him teach. Fortunately, one of these lessons appears to have been preserved and is available for study at the Bibliothèque générale (*Al-Khizāna al-'amma*) in Rabat. Although it must be admitted that it is impossible for anyone to fully verify whether or not this short and unique text is indeed one of those belonging to the famous Berber shaykh,<sup>65</sup> one can fairly conclude that both the extemporaneous form of the document and the doctrines contained therein are entirely consistent with both the style of the early Nūrīya and what one would expect from the teachings of a brilliant but marginally educated tribesman. The following selection, presented in the original as a group of run-together sentences in rhymed prose, gives a small taste of the flavor of the work as a whole:

I have seen Beauty (*al-Jamāl*), I have seen Glory (*al-Jalāl*)—  
My Lover and Beloved, in any case.

But the gnostics have been annihilated—  
They see nothing but the Imperious (*al-Mutakabbir*), the Most  
Exalted (*al-Muta'āl*).

They see what is other than Him actually killed,  
In the present, in the past, and in the future.

<sup>65</sup>Some of the lines of poetry contained in this text have been attributed to Abū Ya'zā's even more famous disciple, the great Andalusian shaykh Abū Madyan Shu'ayb ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī (d. 594/1198). See, for example, the poem reproduced in 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *Shaykh al-shuyūkh Abū Madyan al-Ghawth: ḥayātuhu wa-mi'rājuḥu ilā Allāh* (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1985), pp. 121–22. Since biographical sources, however, maintain that Abū Madyan freely utilized the sayings of his shaykh throughout his writings, the inclusion of these lines in the poem cited above in no way proves that they were not first uttered by Abū Ya'zā himself.

The sun of the day sets by night,  
But the Sun of the Heart is never absent.

He who perceives the interiors of bodies  
Comprehends the essential secrets.

One who sees the Sun of the Beloved is absent from near or far,  
And finds nothing but the All-Hearing (*al-Samīʿ*), the All-Answering (*al-Mujīb*).<sup>66</sup>

Upon reading the above passage it is difficult not to be reminded of how much the themes evoked by Abū Yaʿzā recall the more sophisticated works of some of his Eastern contemporaries, such as the Central Asian Ṣūfī Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 617/1220). In the space of a little more than two pages the Moroccan Berber shaykh discourses—most of the time in a state of mystical “mindlessness,” or *ḥāl*—on a number of themes common to illuminationist Ṣūfism in general. These include:

1. The idea that gnosis involves perceiving Creation as a manifestation of the divine attributes of Beauty (*al-Jamāl*) and Glory (*al-Jalāl*).
2. The all-pervading nature of esoteric knowledge, as exemplified by the Qurʾānic passage: “Say: Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Verily falsehood was bound to vanish,”<sup>67</sup> to which Abū Yaʿzā adds: “Were the light of certainty to dawn, the existence of the universe would surely be concealed.”
3. The concept of the Sun of Gnosis: “So gnosis is also a sun,” says the shaykh, “and at the appearance of the sun the star holds no sway. . . .”
4. The reciprocal identity of mystical annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and the eternal presence (*baqāʾ*) of the Divine.
5. The spiritual alchemy that transforms the base metal of the carnal soul into its spiritual opposite.

It is hardly necessary to remind anyone acquainted with the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* how much the above themes resemble some of the concepts advanced more systematically by Ibn Ṭufayl himself. Equally illuminating is their similarity to parts of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī’s own *Risālat maqāmāt al-qulūb*. In Station 12 of al-Nūrī’s treatise, under the title “The First Thing That [God] Initiates in the Heart of the Gnostic,” we find:

<sup>66</sup> Abū Yaʿzā Yalannūr ibn Maymūn al-Dakkālī, *Risāla fī l-taṣawwuf*, Bibliothèque générale (Rabat), MS. no. 1019D. The text is neither page nor folio numbered.

<sup>67</sup> Sūrat Banī Isrāʾīl (17), vs. 81.

The first thing that God initiates in the heart of one for whom He desires happiness is light. That light next becomes an illumination, then an irradiation, then a moon, [and finally] it becomes a sun. When light appears in the heart, [the gnostic] loses interest in the material world and all that is in it. [But] when it becomes a moon, he renounces [even] the Hereafter and all that is in it. When it becomes a sun, he sees neither the material world and what is in it, nor the Hereafter and what is in it, and knows nothing but his Lord, the Most High. [At this station] his body is light, his heart is light, and his speech is light: "Light upon light. God guides toward His Light whomsoever He wills."<sup>68</sup>

It is tempting, although largely unprovable at this point in time, to speculate that the figure of Abū Ya'zā provided at least one of Ibn Ṭufayl's models for the fictional character of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān. The Moroccan shaykh was certainly well enough known to serve such a purpose. Long before he died during an epidemic in 572/1177, Abū Ya'zā's fame as a healer and miracle worker had transcended the boundaries of North Africa and had spread into the urban areas of Islamic Spain, while Berbers throughout the mountainous regions of the Maghrib saw him both as a semi-divine "Man of Light" and as living proof that the promise of Islamic sanctity and salvation could be attained by one of their own. To the more educated and sophisticated inhabitants of the western Maghrib, Abū Ya'zā was equally well known for his singular comportment and idiosyncratic personal behavior, some of which resembled that attributed to the fictional gnostic Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān.

In his popular work on the life of Abū Ya'zā, the sixteenth-century Moroccan historian Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Qāsim al-Ṣūma'ī (d. 1013/1604–1605) reports that for more than 25 years the saint wandered about the uninhabited areas of the Moroccan countryside, where he subsisted on wild plants and was befriended by lions, beasts, and birds of the forests. He was known never to eat another person's meal (an act of the *malāmatīya*, or those who followed the "Path of Blame"), nor did he ask anyone else to follow his way of life until the day he died.<sup>69</sup> For a further 20 years the shaykh lived in the high peaks above Tīn Mallāl in the High Atlas mountains south of Marrakesh, where the mosque and tomb of the Muwaḥḥid *mahdī* Muḥammad

<sup>68</sup>P. Nwyia, "Textes mystiques inédits d'Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī (m. 295/907)," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 44 (1968), p. 138. The Qur'ānic quotation is Sūrat al-Nūr (24), vs. 35.

<sup>69</sup>Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Qāsim al-Ṣūma'ī al-Tādilī, *Al-Mu'zā fī manāqib Abī Ya'zā*, Bibliothèque générale (Rabat), MS no. 299 K, fol. 3.

ibn Tūmart stand today. During this time he was called by the nickname *Abū Wagartīl* ("Owner of the Prayer Mat"), because he was in the habit of wearing nothing but a woven mat to cover the nakedness of his body.<sup>70</sup> After leaving the High Atlas, Abū Ya'zā next returned to the Dukkāla coast, where he stayed another 18 years and was known as *Abū Wanalgūt*, after a plant he would eat that grew on trash and compost heaps. Toward the end of his life he was known to subsist on the hearts of oleander (*dafla*) and on wild acorn (*ballūt*) mash, which he would form into flat cakes and carry around with him in a small pouch attached to his belt.<sup>71</sup> Approximately 30 years before the end of his life the shaykh moved to Tāghīyā in the Maghrāwa tribal region of the Middle Atlas mountains, northwest of the present town of Khenifra, where his still widely venerated tomb stands today. While there he continued to practice partial seclusion from human society, living on a forested hilltop and seeing others only for the necessary purposes of teaching and healing.<sup>72</sup>

It is important to remember at this juncture that the story of the fictional Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, the reclusive practices of Andalusian *shar'ī* Ṣūfīs like Ibn al-'Arīf, and the ascetic anchoritic life of Abū Ya'zā all embody attitudes toward holiness whose antecedents long predate the medieval Islamic context in which they appeared. The implicit assumption lying behind the ascetic practices of all three individuals—a belief in an opposition between human culture and the world of nature—goes back in Western civilization at least as far as Classical times, if not before. According to this belief, much of the miraculous power possessed by a saint or holy man stems from his absence of participation in human society. In Late Antiquity this attitude was often manifested not only in the avoidance of human social life in general but by sexual abstinence as well, which, as in the case of Abū Ya'zā many centuries later, was frequently combined with a complementary abstinence from certain kinds of foods. In the Byzantine world many saints, in a manner similar to that of the figures discussed here, considered cultivated or cooked foods to be forbidden and instead consumed plants in their wild and uncooked form.<sup>73</sup> The same was often the case with the consumption of meat, for in the Romano-Byzantine world meat was somewhat paradoxically associated both with Barbarism and urban society, neither of which was to be accepted by the true ascetic.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Al-Tādīlī, *Tashawwuf*, p. 197.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Ṣūma'ī, *Mu'zā*, fol. 3r.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 5. Unlike Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, however, Abū Ya'zā married, albeit at a great age, and had a son who was as worldly as the shaykh himself was ascetic.

<sup>73</sup> Evelyne Patlagean, "Ancient Byzantine Hagiography and Social History," in *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History*, edited by Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 101–21.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

The same attitude, which incidentally figures as well in the "Pastoral Ideal" shared by many of the Hellenistic philosophers with whom Ibn Ṭufayl was familiar, also appears in the Eastern Orthodox "Fool for Christ's Sake" (*salos*), whose way of life, although considered doctrinally acceptable, belonged to the *opera supererogatoria* and was not mentioned as part of the formal body of monks' statutes.<sup>75</sup> Even more relevant to the present discussion is the much earlier concept of the *paccekabuddha* in Hinayana Buddhism. In the *Questions of King Milinda*, a Pali text written at the beginning of the Christian era, these individuals are described as Buddhas for themselves alone, "dependent on themselves alone, wanting no teacher, dwellers alone like the solitary horn of the rhinoceros, who so far as their own higher life is concerned, have pure hearts free from stain."<sup>76</sup> In the hierarchy of awareness described by this text, the *paccekabuddhas* stand immediately above the *arahants*, or saints properly called, who differ from them, as Absāl differed from Ḥayy, because of their need for a teacher.<sup>77</sup>

Obviously, in the case of attitudes which go as far back as these, and which, during the lifetimes of both Ibn Ṭufayl and Abū Ya'zā, had already achieved the status of cultural universals, no mere resemblance between the actions of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān and the Berber shaykh, or even the fact that Abū Ya'zā and Ibn Ṭufayl both apparently followed illuminationist Ṣūfī traditions, is sufficient in itself to infer a clear doctrinal relationship between the ideas of the Moroccan saint and the Andalusian philosopher. This point is all the more relevant because it is not yet clear how many of the Arabic works of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, the shaykh of Ibn Ṭufayl's Ṣūfī *tā'ifa*, were accessible on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar during the sixth/twelfth century. For the time being then, until clear references to these works are found in North African manuscript collections, the researcher seeking to tie together the separate doctrinal traditions of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī and Aḥmad al-Ghazālī in the Maghrib must remain content with merely noting the similarities contained in extant works and take at face value the chains of transmission that appear in the biographies.

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In conclusion, then, how can we sum up Ibn Ṭufayl's place in the world of sixth/twelfth-century Maghribī Ṣūfism? First of all, in terms of his social

<sup>75</sup>See Alexander Y. Syrkin, "On the Behavior of the 'Fool for Christ's Sake,'" *History of Religions*, 22 (1982), pp. 150–57.

<sup>76</sup>Quoted in Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 14.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 14–15. The question of the influence of Indian religious philosophies, both Hindu and Buddhist, on the works of medieval Muslim thinkers remains largely open and deserves serious study.

and intellectual origins he seems to have been somewhat out of step with the tenor of his times. Although he hailed from the right place, the Andalusian Levant, which had been the center of a renaissance in the religious sciences for nearly a century, his Qaysī Arab background was anomalous in a court noted for the numbers of its Berber and neo-Muslim scholars. Had he lived 50 years earlier or a century later this would not have been a problem, yet in the environment of the early Muwaḥḥid state a sort of backlash against the former Arab ruling elites of North Africa and Muslim Spain was taking place, which culminated in the caliph Ya'qūb al-Manṣūr's imprisonment of conservative Mālikī scholars and the burning of their books of sectarian juridical decisions (*furū'*) as a sort of revenge for these scholars' own destruction of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'* nearly a hundred years earlier.<sup>78</sup> In light of the social overtones implicit in this jurisprudential conflict, it is extremely significant that in the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, Ibn Ṭufayl never mentions the *Iḥyā'* *'ulūm al-dīn*—not even the philosophically relevant sections of its "Book of Knowledge." For one so well versed in the other works of al-Ghazālī, and maturing at a time when the *Iḥyā'* served as the ideological standard for the entire Muwaḥḥid movement, it is inconceivable that Ibn Ṭufayl could have neglected this work if he had belonged to the Ash'arī-Uṣūlī-Ṣūfī intellectual tradition outlined above. For students of the conservative Mālikī scholars who survived the Murābiṭ collapse, however, the *Iḥyā'* remained anathema, both because of its strong assertion of Shāfi'ī jurisprudential principles and its rejection of the scholarly *taqlīd* on which the Andalusian Mālikī legal school was based. When one adds to this attitude the fact that the otherwise conservative Mālikī legists of the Murābiṭ era were also known to be fond of *falsafa*, it seems apparent that Ibn Ṭufayl belonged intellectually to this earlier, now outdated group, and that he was extremely lucky to have lived in the age of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, who, alone among the first Muwaḥḥid caliphs, had a marked fondness for philosophical speculation.

The same observation can also be made about Ibn Ṭufayl's Ṣūfism. Although the text of al-Tādilī's *Tashawwuf* clearly states that the Andalusian physician and courtier belonged to an apparently illuminationist *ṭā'ifa* that traced its lineage to al-Ghazālī's brother Aḥmad, nowhere does it indicate that Ibn Ṭufayl attached himself to this school at any time earlier than the sojourn in Marrakesh that marked the culmination of his career. This impression is indirectly confirmed by the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* itself, for despite its occasional evocation of terms like *fanā'*, *baqā'*, and *dhawq*, as well as its apparently mystical point of view, the work as a whole is

<sup>78</sup>The burning of these books is described first-hand in al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, pp. 400–401.

clearly not that of a typical Maghribī Ṣūfī, nor even of a lone ascetic such as Abū Marwān al-Yuḥānisī, but of a philosopher. Western scholars who consider *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* to have Ṣūfī overtones need to be reminded once again that Islamic Ṣūfism is at heart a spiritual methodology and not a single philosophical system. As such, it may encompass a number of different attitudes and types of mystical doctrines, ranging from the strictly fideistic, like that of the Ṣūfī and legist Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī of Seville, to the heavily Neoplatonic, like that of Ṣūfī and metaphysician Muḥyī l-Dīn ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) of Murcia. In the case of Ibn Ṭufayl it is clear that although he shared a number of philosophical and doctrinal points of view with other Ṣūfīs in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, such as the Moroccan illuminationist school represented by ‘Abd al-Jalīl ibn Wayḥlān and Abū Ya‘zā, he differed greatly with most of them on matters of spiritual method—especially in regard to the importance of discipleship and the need for a spiritual master. Indeed, this difference of opinion is unequivocally expressed by the author himself when he makes Ḥayy the master of Absāl and details the frustrations that both of them suffer in the exoteric religious world of Salāmān’s city.<sup>79</sup> One cannot help but think, upon reading the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in its socio-historical context, that despite his warm welcome and unquestioned good fortune, Ibn Ṭufayl must have felt a similar sense of loneliness and frustration in the Muwaḥḥid court, and that—like Ḥayy on the island of Absāl and Salāmān—he longed for the day when he could find true intellectual and spiritual companionship and when the genius that he perceived to subsist in the science of *falsafa* could once again be appreciated.

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<sup>79</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 144–45, 150–54.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### HOW CAN MAN REACH THE MYSTICAL UNION? IBN ṬUFAYL AND THE DIVINE SPARK

Bernd Radtke

(Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht)

For R. Seán O'Fahey

At the beginning of his *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, Ibn Ṭufayl tells its unnamed recipient that he proposes to discuss some of the ideas of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) about the *ḥikma mashriqīya*.<sup>1</sup> These ideas remind Ibn Ṭufayl of a mystical experience of his own,<sup>2</sup> which he says was identical with the experiences of some of the famous Muslim mystics. Such experiences demand description. Those unschooled, such as Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 260/874)<sup>3</sup> and al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922),<sup>4</sup> sought to describe what they had experienced in theopathic utterances. The learned al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), in seeking to describe his own experience, resorted to the following verses:

What happened, I do not wish to say.

Believe it good and ask no more, I pray.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, edited by Léon Gautier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), pp. 3:3–4:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4:3–10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4:10–11. Abū Yazīd's famous words are: "Praise be to me; how exalted is my standing!" (*subḥānī mā a'ẓama sha'nī*); see Richard Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1965–81), II, 329.

<sup>4</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 4:11–12. For al-Ḥallāj's "I am the Truth" (*anā l-ḥaqq*) maxim, see also Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 327–28. The third dictum quoted by Ibn Ṭufayl (*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 4:12) is "Only God is in the cowl" (*laysa fī l-thawb illā llāh*), which is generally ascribed to Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī l-Khayr (d. 440/1049); see Fritz Meier, *Abū Sa'īd-i Abū l-Ḥayr* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), p. 87 and n. 38, where the variants are given; also below, p. 180 and n. 130. Sami S. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 233 and n. 1, should be corrected.

<sup>5</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 4ult. This is a quotation from al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, edited by F. Jabre (Beirut: Commission internationale pour la traduction des chefs-d'oeuvres, 1959), p. 40:3; cf. also Hellmut Ritter, *Das Elixier der Glückseligkeit* (Düsseldorf: E. Diederichs, 1959), p. 15.

Ibn Ṭufayl follows these verses with the assertion from the *Risālat al-ittiṣāl*<sup>6</sup> of the philosopher Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139)<sup>7</sup> that the mystical union (*unio/conjunctio*)<sup>8</sup> is beyond description. On this Ibn Ṭufayl comments<sup>9</sup> that although Ibn Bājja achieved a sort of union by a process of speculative reasoning, what he achieved was different from the experience of al-Biṣṭāmī, al-Ḥallāj, and al-Ghazālī. Nor did he go beyond where reason took him. In essence, his experience did not differ from that of the three mystics; indeed, the latter experienced it with much greater immediacy.<sup>10</sup> The best description<sup>11</sup> of the mystical union is in the *Ishārāt*<sup>12</sup> of Ibn Sīnā, which Ibn Ṭufayl proceeds to quote:<sup>13</sup>

When the mystic's striving for God and his tempering of his soul reach a certain point, there steals up upon him the rays of the light of God, which delight him, being like lightning flashes that suddenly come upon him, and then go. The more zealous he is in his schooling of himself, the more frequently will these unexpected moments<sup>14</sup> come upon him. So zealous may he become that these moments will steal upon him without his soul being schooled. Whenever he sees a thing, he turns from it to God, since it always calls God to mind. Once again these moments will steal up upon him. He comes close to seeing God in all things. His schooling reaches a point when these passing moments become an irreversible God-inspired tranquility.<sup>15</sup> What was transitory is now habitual; what was a flash of light-

<sup>6</sup> *Risālat al-ittiṣāl*, edited by Mājīd Fakhrī in *Rasā'il ilāhīya (Opera metaphysica)* (Beirut: Dār al-nahār, 1968), p. 172pu; also Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 5:1-4.

<sup>8</sup> For the terms, see Philip Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 5:8-10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5:11-12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6:2-4.

<sup>12</sup> For this quotation, see also C.A. Nallino, "Filosofia 'orientale' od 'illuminativa' d'Avicenna?," in his *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, VI (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1948), p. 220.

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, edited by Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1960), pp. 828-30.

<sup>14</sup> The term used here is *ghawāshī*; cf. also al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), *Kitāb al-luma'*, edited by R.A. Nicholson (Leiden and London: Luzac, 1914; *Gibb Memorial Series*, 22), p. 340:7, s.v. *ghashya*; = Richard Gramlich, *Schlaglichter über das Sufitum* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990; *Freiburger Islamstudien*, 13), p. 477.

<sup>15</sup> The word for this is *sakīna*, a term used frequently by mystics; cf. Benedikt Reinert, *Die Lehre vom tawakkul in der klassischen Sufik* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), pp. 11, 84. For the third/ninth century, see al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 299/910), *Khatm al-awliyā'*, edited by O. Yaḥyā (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1965), pp. 347ff.; =

ning is now a clearly shining star. He thereby acquires a firmly grounded knowledge which is like a constant companion.

Ibn Ṭufayl concludes with Ibn Sīnā's words:<sup>16</sup>

The innermost self<sup>17</sup> of the mystic becomes a polished mirror<sup>18</sup> which is turned to God. The most exalted delights flow over him; his soul rejoices at the traces of God within them. Back and forth he glances, now at God, now at his soul. He loses sight of his soul in his vision of God. If he looks at himself, he sees himself only as a seer. At this point the union has been reached.

Ibn Ṭufayl stresses once more that the experience described by Ibn Sīnā is gained by *dhawq*,<sup>19</sup> not by intellectual perception. It is for this reason that the conceptualization of these experiences is so difficult. If one seeks to make such conceptualizations,<sup>20</sup> one is confronted with the difficulty, especially in Andalusia, that no preparatory studies have been made.<sup>21</sup> Thus, for example, Ibn Bājja's work remained incomplete.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) was primarily a logician, and besides, his work contains a number of errors,<sup>23</sup> such as his teaching that the damnation of wicked souls meant that they would be subjected to eternal torment.<sup>24</sup> He also held that happiness is only possible in this world, and that to say otherwise is idle chatter.<sup>25</sup> Ibn Sīnā is chiefly a follower of Aristotle. The essence of his teaching is to be found in his *Al-Falsafa al-mashriqīya*,<sup>26</sup> but Ibn Ṭufayl does not tell us if he has read this text.<sup>27</sup> He continues to observe

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his *Sīrat al-awliyā'*, edited by Bernd Radtke in his *Drei Schriften des Theosophen von Tirmid* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), pp. 47–49.

<sup>16</sup> *Ishārāt*, p. 833.

<sup>17</sup> Here *sirr*, another Ṣūfī term; see Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 81ff.

<sup>18</sup> See n. 52 below.

<sup>19</sup> A Ṣūfī term; see Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 127.

<sup>20</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 10:11–11:7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11:9–13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12:11–13:10; see also Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 68ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 13:10–12; see also Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 51ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 13:12–14:1; see also Richard Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 466–67.

<sup>25</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 14:1–4; see also Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, pp. 410, 443.

<sup>26</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 14:9–15:1.

<sup>27</sup> For the writings meant here, see Nallino, "Filosofia 'orientale'," pp. 252–54. I shall not deal here with the question of the *ḥikmat al-mashriq/al-ishrāq*; see my article "Theosophie (Ḥikma) und Philosophie (Falsafa). Ein Beitrag zur Frage der *Ḥikmat al-maṣriq/al-iṣrāq*," *Asiatische Studien*, 42 (1988), pp. 156–74.

that al-Ghazālī's writings contain many contradictions, and that not all of them had reached the West;<sup>28</sup> nevertheless, he will base his discussion on al-Ghazālī<sup>29</sup> and also on Ibn Sīnā.

To sum up at this point: Ibn Ṭufayl proposes to answer the request to discuss problems of the *ḥikma mashriqiya* with reference to Ibn Sīnā. The purpose of this philosophy is, according to Ibn Ṭufayl, the *unio/conjunctio*. In describing the experience of the *unio*, he quotes, on the one hand, from mystics, and on the other, from philosophers such as Ibn Bājja, Ibn Sīnā, and al-Ghazālī. In this context, some of al-Fārābī's views are criticized, while it should be noted here that al-Kindī (d. ca. 256/870) is not mentioned.

I should like to continue, first by discussing Ibn Ṭufayl's description of the union, and then on the basis of this discussion to ask the question, which of the two traditions—the philosophical or the mystical—did he follow?

### *The Mystical Union According to Ibn Ṭufayl*

The path to the mystical union comprises three stages which each correspond to a part of the human totality,<sup>30</sup> namely, the corporeal body (*al-badan*), the animating spirit (*al-rūḥ al-ḥayawānī*), and the divine spark (*al-dhāt/al-amr al-rabbānī/al-ilāhī*).<sup>31</sup> Each part has its respective sphere of activity: the earth, the heavens, and God. The mystical path requires that each part be assimilated<sup>32</sup> or in harmony with its respective sphere.

In the first stage along the path, the body and its counterpart, the earth, are both hindrances as well as aids.<sup>33</sup> How they are used is the decisive point. Thus the mystic will seek to avoid unnecessary pleasures and eat only enough to sustain himself in preparation for the next stages. He will take care not to destroy nature's wise sufficiency.<sup>34</sup>

In the second stage, the mystic's harmony and assimilation to the heavens derives from his knowledge of their characteristics.<sup>35</sup> On the one hand, he observes the wise and disinterested influence of the heavens upon the earth manifested in light, cold, and so forth. He attempts to bring himself into harmony with these influences by developing an all-embracing love.

<sup>28</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 15:6–17:2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18:6–8; see also Hawī, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 66ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 106:6–8. For similar trichotomistic anthropological systems, see Radtke, "Theosophie," p. 163.

<sup>31</sup> For *badan* see *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 106:8; *rūḥ ḥayawānī*: *ibid.*, p. 107:4; *dhāt*: *ibid.*, p. 107:7; *amr rabbānī*: *ibid.*, p. 105:4.

<sup>32</sup> The term here is *tashabbuh*: *ibid.*, p. 107:2–7. Cf. p. 171 and n. 54 below.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106:9–107:1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109pu–113:3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113:7–114:2.

Thus he will seek to preserve all creatures from harm and unhappiness. On the other hand, he comprehends<sup>36</sup> the innermost traits of the heavenly spheres, their wisdom, their purity, and the sublime harmony of their unchanging movements. The mystic will attempt to parallel the wisdom of the heavenly harmony<sup>37</sup> by the scrupulous cleanliness of his body and of his outer appearance; he will thus always be clean and tidy. Finally, in the second stage, he contemplates the relationship between the heavens and their Creator.<sup>38</sup> He understands that the spheres are everlastingly immersed in contemplation of their Creator and are subjected to the wisdom of His governance. Man seeks to emulate the macrocosmos by concentrating all his thoughts upon the Creator and by suppressing all those that derive from the sensory world. But success is always partial, because of the distractions of the flesh.

Perfection is reached in the third stage, wherein the seeker becomes like his Creator.<sup>39</sup> First he contemplates with discrimination the divine attributes, realizing that God indeed possesses attributes such as knowledge, omnipotence, and wisdom,<sup>40</sup> but understanding that these attributes have no like in this world.<sup>41</sup> On this Ibn Tufayl says:<sup>42</sup>

In regard to God's positive attributes: first, the seeker will recognize that all these are identical with the true essence of God,<sup>43</sup> in which there is no multiplicity since multiplicity is a corporeal characteristic. Then he will recognize that God's knowledge of His essence does not transcend that essence; rather, God's essence is the same as God's knowledge of His essence, and contrariwise, God's knowledge of His essence is the same as His essence. It will now become clear to the seeker that when he knows God, he knows that his knowing of God is nothing other than God. Thus he will realize that becoming like God in regard to God's positive attributes is to know God and to know that these attributes are not corporeal.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114:2–115:8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115:9–116:6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114:5–9, 116:6–117:9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117:9–118:7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118:1: *ṣifāt ithbāt*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118:2: *ṣifāt salb*. This is negative theology, the *via remotionis*; material is given in Hans Daiber, *Das theologisch-philosophische System des Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbād as-Sulamī (gest. 830 n. Chr.)* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1975), pp. 129–37.

<sup>42</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 118:8–119:1.

<sup>43</sup> God is identical with his attributes. This was the doctrine of the Mu'tazilī Abū l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf (d. ca. 226/840); see Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, pp. 198–203. But cf. below, n. 234.

This process of knowing and being known is still a duality, one that is dissolved when the seeker passes away<sup>44</sup> in God's essence. God remains as the sole reality. Finally, the mystic understands:<sup>45</sup>

He has no essence apart from God and that on the contrary his true essence is God's essence. Further, that which he thought was his essence and which differed from God's essence in reality is not separate, but rather is God's essence. Likewise, when the rays of the sun fall upon an object and are reflected upon it, they may be attributed to the object upon which they reflect, but in reality they are nothing other than the sun's rays. When the object disappears, the reflected rays will disappear, but the sun's rays continue. The latter suffer neither increase nor decrease because of the object's absence or presence.

Thus far Ibn Ṭufayl on the mystical union. To recapitulate what has emerged thus far: the mystical path has three stages, of which the first two need not detain us further. The third stage comprises: a) the contemplation of the divine attributes, b) the seeker becoming like the object of the quest by the act of knowing, and c) the seeker's passing away in God's essence. The *conditio sine qua non* for the seeker "becoming like" and then "passing away" is the acceptance that his essence is the same as God's essence, that he who is seeking to know is nothing other than the divine spark.

How does the concept of the divine spark relate to the theory of cognition in both philosophy and mysticism? And further, to similar thinking in *kalām* and among the Shī'ī *ghulāt*? In looking at modern studies that take Islamic philosophy as their starting point, I am struck by a certain imbalance. In discussing philosophy, these studies display a mastery in depth; by contrast, on Ṣūfism their generalizations are much more superficial. Ṣūfism is frequently discussed as if it were a spiritual tradition in which there was neither development nor individuality.<sup>46</sup> One reason for this unfortunate imbalance is that despite some excellent work, there are still relatively few editions of the relevant primary sources and even fewer specialized monographs available. A further reason is that those scholars who have concentrated on philosophy have tended to neglect the writings of the mystics.

<sup>44</sup> Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, p. 120:6–7: *al-fanā* 'an nafsihī, a Ṣūfī term; see Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 313–17.

<sup>45</sup> Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, pp. 122ult–123:7.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. the similar remarks by Vincent Cornell in his contribution to this volume, pp. 136, 164 above.

*The Philosophers, the Divine Spark, and the Mystical Union*

## AL-KINDĪ

Although Ibn Ṭufayl does not mention him, I shall begin with al-Kindī and more particularly with his *Risāla fī l-naḥs*.<sup>47</sup> I do so although aware, as Jolivet has shown,<sup>48</sup> that this work presents only one side of al-Kindī and that its formulations are not always in harmony with, for example, his *Risāla fī l-ʿaql*.

In the *Risāla fī l-naḥs*, al-Kindī begins with the statement that the soul is the same substance (*jawhar*)<sup>49</sup> or essence as God's essence, just as the sun's rays are of the same essence as the sun.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, the soul is the ray of the Creator (*min nūr al-bāri'*)<sup>51</sup>. If the soul is purified of its lower instincts—this purification is compared to the polishing of a mirror<sup>52</sup>—and if man thereby acquires such divine attributes as *ḥikma*, *qudra*, *ʿadl*, and the like, his soul will begin to be like the Creator, or at least similar.<sup>53</sup> This al-Kindī describes as *tashabbuh* or *shibh*, as does Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>54</sup> Thus can the soul, most probably after death, ascend to the world of the intellect (*al-ʿaql*),<sup>55</sup> which lies above the heavenly spheres. Here it will attain the light

<sup>47</sup> Al-Kindī, *Rasā'il falsafīya*, edited by Muḥammad Abū Rīda (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-ʿarabī, 1950ff.), I, 272ff.; cf. the commentary in Jean Jolivet, *L'intellect selon Kindī* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), pp. 132ff.

<sup>48</sup> *L'intellect selon Kindī*, pp. 141–42.

<sup>49</sup> For *jawhar* in the sense of *ūsiya*, cf. Gerhard Endress, *Proclus Arabus* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), p. 78; and for *naḥs* as *jawhar*, also the pseudo-Aristotelian *Theology*, edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī in his *Plotinus apud arabes* (Cairo: Maktaba al-naḥḍa al-miṣrīya, 1955), p. 53:5.

<sup>50</sup> *Rasā'il*, I, 273:4–5, 275:–6f.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 274:1.

<sup>52</sup> An image that is also highly appreciated in Sūfism, but there it is generally related to the heart (*qalb*); see Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 75; Manfred Ullmann, *Das Motiv des Spiegels in der arabischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1992), p. 109.

<sup>53</sup> *Rasā'il*, I, 274:–6, 274:–2ff.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 274:–6, 275:1. For the Platonic origin (*homoiōsis theō*, *Theaitet* 176b), cf. Jolivet, *L'intellect selon Kindī*, p. 137 n. 3; also Plotinus (d. AD 270), *Enneads* I.2.1:1–5. For the *tashabbuh bi-l-bāri'* cf. also Alexander Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 197; pseudo-Fārābī, *Risāla fīmā yanbaghī an yuqaddama qabla ta'allum al-falsafa*, edited by Friedrich Dieterici in his *Alfārābīs philosophische Abhandlungen* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1890), p. 53:15–16; and for this writing, cf. Friedrich W. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De interpretatione* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 258. For the relation al-Kindī–Israeli, cf. Gerhard Endress in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 130 (1980), pp. 427–28.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Jolivet, *L'intellect selon Kindī*, pp. 139ff.

of the Creator, both seeing God and becoming like His rays (*ṭābaqat*).<sup>56</sup> The soul now becomes omniscient, like the Creator.<sup>57</sup>

Thus al-Kindī, at least in his *Risāla fī l-nafs*, asserts that there is a divine spark (*nafs*) in man. This is, in origin, of the same essence as God. Once immersed in the material world, it can only become like God again by living an ascetic and philosophical life. This is what al-Kindī means by *tashabbuh*.<sup>58</sup>

#### AL-FĀRĀBĪ

Al-Fārābī calls the noblest part of man—that part which makes man man<sup>59</sup>—*al-juz' al-nāṭiq* or *al-'aql*, the intellect.<sup>60</sup> The cosmic *al-'aql al-fa'āl* (Greek *nous poiētikos*) bestows freely upon man's intellect primary knowledge,<sup>61</sup> which is thus there *in potentia*. In contrast to most classical commentators upon Aristotle, al-Fārābī no longer regards the *nous poiētikos* as the divine spirit, but rather as the intellect of the lowest sphere, that close to the moon.<sup>62</sup> The primary knowledge of the intellect is activated<sup>63</sup>—that is, its potentiality is actualized—through a series of steps, namely *al-'aql al-munfa'il* (*nous pathētikos*) and *al-'aql al-mustafād* (*intellectus acquisitus*).<sup>64</sup> At this point the actualized intellect or spirit<sup>65</sup> becomes the active intellect. No longer bound to matter, the intellect becomes divine

<sup>56</sup> *Rasā'il*, I, 275:2ff.; cf. Jolivet, *L'intellect selon Kindī*, pp. 139–40. In al-Kindī the world of the intellect is also called *malakūt* (*Rasā'il*, I, 276:1), or *'ālam al-daymūmiya* (*ibid.*, I, 276:4), or *'ālam al-rubūbiya* (*ibid.*, I, 278:1, 278pu).

<sup>57</sup> *Rasā'il*, I, 276:8ff., 276:1, 278:10.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Kindī describes mainly a Neoplatonic system, strongly permeated by Aristotelian elements. His theory of cognition, at least in the *Risāla fī l-'aql*, appears to follow that of John Philoponos (d. first half of sixth c. AD), according to Jolivet (*L'intellect selon Kindī*, pp. 50ff.).

<sup>59</sup> *Al-Siyāsa al-madanīya*, edited by Fawzī M. Najjār (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1964), p. 35:4; Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 468 and n. 841.

<sup>60</sup> See his *Al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmāyn*, edited by Albert N. Nader (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1960), p. 108:11–12.

<sup>61</sup> The terms used are *ma'qūlāt*/*'ulūm uwal*. See *Al-Siyāsa al-madanīya*, pp. 17:14ff., 55:5–10; Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, pp. 406–407.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Walzer, *Greek into Arabic* (Oxford: B. Cassirer, 1962), pp. 209–10; *idem*, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 11; Fritz Meier, *Bahā-i Walad. Grundzüge seines Lebens und seiner Mystik* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989), pp. 339–40.

<sup>63</sup> Merlan, *Monopsychism*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>64</sup> For the term, see James Finnegan, "Al-Fārābī et le *Peri nū* d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise," in *Mélanges Louis Massignon* (Damascus: Institut français, 1957), pp. 147ff.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Fārābī also uses the word *rūḥ*. See his *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikma*, edited by Dieterici in his *Abhandlungen* (n. 54 above), p. 75:1–6; also, in the same collection, his *Risāla fī l-'aql*, p. 46:11ff.; and Francesca Lucchetta, *Farabi: Epistola sull'intelletto* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1974), pp. 100–101.



(*ihāhīya*).<sup>66</sup> The man who has attained this stage may be found worthy of divine revelation and inspiration.<sup>67</sup> Thus man, through the process of abstract thought, is the only being capable of transcending the duality of subject and object.<sup>68</sup>

Behind this clearly lies Aristotelian noetics in regard to the assimilation (*homoiōsis*, *homoiūsthai*) of subject and object.<sup>69</sup> But it is of crucial importance for an understanding of al-Fārābī and the later philosophers to define precisely, despite a certain inconsistency, what they meant by assimilation. Are they speaking of an ontological or an intellectual assimilation? Indeed, can one make this distinction?

Let us continue the discussion by quoting al-Fārābī himself:<sup>70</sup>

1. "He reaches the level of the *intellectus agens*."<sup>71</sup>
2. "Now he takes on a divine nature, after having had a material nature."<sup>72</sup>
3. "If the *intellectus in actu* becomes similar to the *intellectus agens*..."<sup>73</sup>
4. "If the 'speaking' part of the soul is perfected and becomes *intellectus in actu*, then it is very similar to 'the separate things'."<sup>74</sup>
5. "Then he reaches the degree that is closest to [the *intellectus agens*]."<sup>75</sup>
6. "If his soul attains the *intellectus agens*... if [the level] of *intellectus acquisitus* is reached, then he attains the *intellectus agens*."<sup>76</sup>
7. "If nothing remains between him and the *intellectus agens*..."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>66</sup> *Al-Siyāsa al-madanīya*, p. 36:4; Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 443 n. 668.

<sup>67</sup> *Al-Siyāsa al-madanīya*, p. 79:12ff.; Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 441.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. also Louis Gardet, *La pensée religieuse d'Avicenne (Ibn Sina)* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1951), pp. 151–52.

<sup>69</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958), pp. 26–27 nn. 25–27.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, pp. 442–43.

<sup>71</sup> *Al-Siyāsa al-madanīya*, p. 35:10–11: *yasīr fī rutbat al-'aql al-fa' 'āl*.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36:4: *wa-yasīr ilāhīyan ba'd an kāna hayūlānīyan*.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36:10: *fa-ammā idhā ḥaṣala l-'aql bi-l-fī'l shabīhan bi-l-'aql al-fa' 'āl*.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42:3–4: *wa-ammā l-juz' al-nātiq min al-nafs fa-innahu idhā stukmila wa-ṣāra 'aqlan bi-l-fī'l fa-innahu yakūn qarīb al-shibh bi-l-ashyā' al-mufāraqa*.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55:5ff.: *fa-yasīr fī aqrab martaba ilayhi* (= *al-'aql al-fa' 'āl*).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79:8ff.: *idhā ttaṣalat nafsuhu bi-l-'aql al-fa' 'āl... bi-ḥuṣūl al-mustafād yakūn al-ittisāl bi-l-'aql al-fa' 'āl*.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79:12–13: *idhā lam yabqa baynahu wa-bayna l-'aql al-fa' 'āl wāsiṭa*.

8. "...that the soul remains forever in this state, and yet its level is lower than that of the *intellectus agens*."<sup>78</sup>
9. "This man has attained the most perfected level of humanity and the highest degree of happiness. His soul is as if it were united with the *intellectus agens*."<sup>79</sup>
10. "If the human intellect reaches its highest perfection, then in its substance it draws near to the substance of this [other] intellect which is called the *intellectus agens*."<sup>80</sup>
11. "Man attains [the *intellectus agens*] in such a manner that he grasps it and becomes aware that the thing which is in his substance and his nature is [pure] intellect. Indeed, for him there is no difference between what is grasped by the intellect and what is outside the intellect. And it is clear that man only grasps the *intellectus agens* once there is no intermediary between them. In this way the soul of man can become the *intellectus agens*."<sup>81</sup>
12. "...as if the soul, on its one side, is united with the intellect, which in its turn is united with the Creator."<sup>82</sup>
13. "Make wisdom a means of my soul becoming united with the divine worlds and with the heavenly spirits."<sup>83</sup>

One thing above all strikes the reader: al-Fārābī's formulations are inconsistent. In some places he unmistakably describes a union of the soul or of the "thinking part" of the soul with the active intellect, while in others he describes this union as partial or only apparent. Basing himself on the apparent—the *ka-anna* formulations in *Al-Madīna al-fāḍila*—Walzer was

<sup>78</sup> Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 206:1ff. §13:5: *an tabqā* (= *al-nafs*) '*alā tilka l-ḥāl dā'imān abadan illā anna rutbatahā takūn dūna rutbat al-'aql al-fa' 'āl*'.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244:15–16 §15:11: *wa-hādhā l-insān fī akmal marātib al-insāniyya wa-fī a'lā darajāt al-sa'āda wa-takūn nafsuhu ka-l-muttaḥida bi-l-'aql al-fa' 'āl*.

<sup>80</sup> *Falsafat Aristūṭālīs*, edited by Muḥsin Maḥdī (Beirut: Dār majallat shi'r, 1961), p. 128:6–7: *wa-anna l-'aql al-insānī idhā balagha aqṣā kamālihi ṣāra qarīban fī jawharihi min jawhar hādhā l-'aql fa-summiya hādhā l-'aql al-fa' 'āl*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128:18ff.: *wa-l-insān muttaṣilan bihi ḍarban mā min al-ittiṣāl bi-an yakūn qad 'aqalahu wa-tabayyana anna l-shay' alladhī huwa fī jawharihi wa-ṭabī'atihi 'aql fa-innahu laysa bayna an yūjad ma'qūlan wa-bayna an yūjad khārij al-'aql farq fa-bāna anna l-insān innamā ya'qiluhu* (= *al-'aql al-fa' 'āl*) *idhā lam yaṣīr baynahu wāsiṭa fa-huwa fa-min hādhīhi l-jihā taṣīr nafs al-insān hiya hādhā l-'aql*.

<sup>82</sup> *Jam'*, p. 108:16–17: *fa-ka-annahā muttaḥida min aḥad ṭarafayhā bi-l-'aql alladhī huwa muttaḥid bi-l-bārī*'.

<sup>83</sup> *Du'ā'*, edited by Muḥsin Maḥdī in *Al-Milla wa-nuṣuṣ ukhrā* (Beirut: Dār al-mashriq, 1968), p. 90:16–17: *wa-j'al al-ḥikma sababan li-ttiḥād nafsī bi-l-'awālim al-ilāhiyya wa-l-arwāḥ al-samāwiyya*.

inclined to see a decisively antimystical stance in al-Fārābī which allegedly distinguishes him from other philosophers who lean more towards Neoplatonism in its mystical guise.<sup>84</sup> To this several objections can be made. First, there is the question of al-Fārābī's own inconsistency.<sup>85</sup> Second, there is the question as to whether the distinction between ontological and intellectual union is at all relevant. Third, the question needs to be considered as to whether Islamic mysticism at the time of al-Fārābī knew of an ontological union, an issue Walzer<sup>86</sup> and others have taken for granted.<sup>87</sup>

For al-Fārābī, the highest part of man is the "thinking part of the soul." Through the act of cognition, a form of union with the lowest level of the divine emanation, the *intellectus agens*, may be achieved. At this point, the knower and the known become one and the same and the "thinking part" of the soul once again partakes of the divine. By contrast to al-Kindī, for al-Fārābī the soul is only an emanation of the lowest level of the emanation of God; it is not of the light of God nor of His substance. And to repeat, the union is only with the lowest level of the divine emanation. The divine vision of God is unknown to al-Fārābī. To describe union al-Fārābī uses the verbs *ittaṣala* or *ittahada*, or such expressions as *ṣāra fī/ilā rutbat al-'aql al-fa' 'āl*, but only rarely the root *sh-b-h*.<sup>88</sup>

#### IBN SĪNĀ

The crucial passage by Ibn Sīnā on mysticism has been translated above.<sup>89</sup> By contrast to al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā's vocabulary has obviously been influenced by Ṣūfī writers. As for Ibn Sīnā's noetics, one need only refer to the studies of Gardet<sup>90</sup> and Rahman.<sup>91</sup> In opposition to al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā considers that when the "thinking part" of the soul has become the

<sup>84</sup>Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, pp. 13, 442–44; *idem*, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 210. Cf. also Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*, p. 24 n. 17.

<sup>85</sup>Walzer demonstrates the contrary opinion in *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 442.

<sup>86</sup>*Greek into Arabic*, p. 210; *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 443.

<sup>87</sup>Lucchetta, *Intelletto*, p. 45, contrasting the mystical *ittiḥād* with the philosophical *ittiṣāl*; cf. also Merlan, *Monopsychism*, pp. 28ff.; James Finnegan, "Avicenna's Refutation of Porphyrius," in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1956), p. 202. Walzer is right when he stresses that basically there is no difference between *ittiḥād* and *ittiṣāl*; see his *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, pp. 409–10.

<sup>88</sup>Perhaps one should consider that in the Aristotelian poetics of the philosophers, beginning with al-Fārābī, *tashabbuh* may be the translation of the Greek *mimesis* (*tashbīh* and *muḥākāt*); cf. Wolfhart Heinrichs, *Arabische Dichtung und griechische Poetik* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1969), pp. 121–22.

<sup>89</sup>See pp. 166–67 above.

<sup>90</sup>*Pensée religieuse*, pp. 114–15, 150–51.

<sup>91</sup>*Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 14–20.

*intellectus sanctus* (*al-‘aql al-qudsī*), contact is possible with the Supreme Reason (*al-‘aql al-kullī*).<sup>92</sup>

Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of the mystical union presents difficulties.<sup>93</sup> One may quote from the *Risāla fī l-‘ishq*:<sup>94</sup>

In this paragraph we wish to explain the fact that every being loves the absolute Good with an innate love, and that this absolute Good displays itself (*yatajallā*)<sup>95</sup> to the person who loves it. However, the manner by which beings receive this self-displaying and unite themselves with it<sup>96</sup> varies. The greatest nearness to God lies in the reception of His self-displaying in reality, that is to say, as perfectly as possible. This is what the Šūfis call *ittiḥād*.

If one combines this quotation with the earlier quotation from the *Ishārāt*, Ibn Sīnā's meaning becomes explicit; the mystical union is the result of two processes. The first process is that by the act of self-purification, man, so to speak, turns himself into a mirror.<sup>97</sup> Concomitant with this process is the second: that this man is exposed to the self-displaying of the divine essence.<sup>98</sup> Although at first the duality of God and man remains within this vision of God, in the end the mystic is so overwhelmed by God's essence that he forgets himself, sees only God, and forgets that it is he who is seeing.

From this description of the union, Gardet concluded that Ibn Sīnā is describing not an ontological union, as allegedly taught by the Šūfis, but merely a psychological union.<sup>99</sup> Finnegan<sup>100</sup> agrees with Gardet, and the opinion of both is seemingly confirmed by other statements of Ibn Sīnā. One of these is Ibn Sīnā's famous denunciation of Porphyry (d. AD 302),<sup>101</sup> whom he reproaches along with others<sup>102</sup> for teaching that in the act of

<sup>92</sup> *Kitāb al-najāt* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-sa‘āda, 1938), p. 167:3–4; Gardet, *Pensée religieuse*, pp. 116, 161. But cf. al-Fārābī, *Al-Siyāsa al-madanīya*, p. 79:12ff.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. also Merlan, *Monopsychism*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>94</sup> *Risāla fī l-‘ishq*, edited by A.F. Mehren in his *Traité mystiques d’Avicenne* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1894), p. 23:–8ff. Cf. also Finnegan, "Avicenna's Refutation of Porphyrius," p. 202.

<sup>95</sup> A Šūfī term: see Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 421.

<sup>96</sup> Text: *bihi*; this may be related to *tajallī* or God.

<sup>97</sup> See n. 52 above; also al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikma*, p. 75:1–6. Cf. Gardet, *Pensée religieuse*, p. 153.

<sup>98</sup> *Risālat al-‘ishq*, p. 23:9–10: *laysa tajallīhi illā ḥaqīqat dhātīhi*.

<sup>99</sup> Gardet, *Pensée religieuse*, pp. 149–50, 152–55, 161, 180, 190.

<sup>100</sup> *Refutation*, p. 189. Cf. n. 87 above.

<sup>101</sup> *Ishārāt*, pp. 702–703; cf. Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State*, p. 443.

<sup>102</sup> *Ishārāt*, pp. 698–99.

cognition the substance (*jawhar*) of the knower becomes the known.<sup>103</sup> As for Ibn Sīnā this is an impossibility, equally impossible is the ontological union. Even though the soul may indeed become a perfect mirror for the Divine essence's self-displaying, its individuality remains.<sup>104</sup>

To this there are two objections. First, as Gardet himself saw,<sup>105</sup> elsewhere Ibn Sīnā contradicts himself by admitting a union (*ittiḥād*) of the *intellectus* and the *intelligibile*.<sup>106</sup> Al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (d. ca. 587/1191) rightly reproaches Ibn Sīnā for these contradictions.<sup>107</sup> The second objection comes from the arguments rightly put forward by Rahman against Gardet.<sup>108</sup> Rahman begins by noting that in the Aristotelian tradition cognition entails some sort of assimilation of the known by the knower.<sup>109</sup> But neither Aristotle's classical commentators (like Alexander of Aphrodisias) nor Ibn Sīnā envisaged an absolute union.<sup>110</sup> To this I would comment, what does "ontological" or "psychological" mean with regard to noetic acts? Are not noetic acts a part of being? Is the modern prejudice that the acts of the soul somehow possess less "being" or reality than those perceived through the senses relevant to medieval Islamic philosophy and mysticism? Perhaps Ibn Sīnā shared al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl's opinion, namely that union is only possible after death. So long as the soul is captive in the body only a relative union is possible.<sup>111</sup>

We shall return in due course to the general question as to whether Ibn Sīnā is correct in saying that the Ṣūfīs taught an ontological union which they called *ittiḥād*.

Compared to al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā is more of a mystic. Not only does he use the language of mysticism, but his description of man's final goal is

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 698:2-3; *De anima* V.6, edited by Fazlur Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 239:10-11; similarly in al-Ghazālī, *Al-Maqṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ ma'ānī asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*, edited by Fadlou Shehadi (Beirut: Dār al-mashriq, 1971), p. 164:13ff. Cf. also Richard Gramlich, *Muḥammad al-Gazzālīs Lehre von den Stufen der Gottesliebe* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1984), p. 429, D 60; *ibid.*, p. 633, F 70.

<sup>104</sup> Gardet, *Pensée religieuse*, p. 152.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>106</sup> *Najāt*, pp. 166:12ff., 246:1ff., 293:-6ff.

<sup>107</sup> *Opera metaphysica et mystica*, edited by Henri Corbin and Sayyid Hossein Nasr (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1945-70), I, 68-69 §54.

<sup>108</sup> *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 26-28 nn. 27-29. Ibn Sīnā identifies *ittiḥād* and *ittiṣāl* in the *Risālat al-'ishq* (n. 94 above); the *tajallī* of God is the Ṣūfī *ittiḥād*. Later al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl likewise draws no distinction between *ittiḥād* and *ittiṣāl*; see his *Opera*, I, 73:9ff.

<sup>109</sup> He quotes Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. early third c. AD), *De anima*, edited by Ivo Bruns (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1887-92; *Supplementum Aristotelicum*, 2), p. 84:2ff. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 91:20-22; also Aristotle, *De anima* III.8.1.

<sup>110</sup> *Prophecy in Islam*, p. 27 nn. 27, 29.

<sup>111</sup> *Opera*, I, 73:9-16 §55.

explicitly mystical. He knows of the union with the supreme being. That part of man which can attain this union is for him, as for al-Fārābī, the “thinking part” of the soul which is able to transform itself into the *intellectus sanctus*. At this point God can display Himself within the innermost soul—that is, within the *sirr*.

#### AL-SUHRAWARDĪ AL-MAQTŪL

I should like to comment briefly on Ibn Sīnā's spiritual successor, al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, whose views on union have already been described. For al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl the “thinking part” is a light from God,<sup>112</sup> going out from Him and returning to Him. He continues by describing its substance (*jawhar*) more precisely as being of the essence of the world of *malakūt*,<sup>113</sup> stressing that the soul is neither of the same essence as God<sup>114</sup> nor a part of Him.<sup>115</sup> Like al-Fārābī, al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl identifies the “thinking soul” with man's spirit (*rūḥ*), to which he gives the attribute *ilāhī*, “divine.”<sup>116</sup> It partakes of the same substance as that of the angels;<sup>117</sup> here, therefore, *ilāhī* does not mean “divine” in the sense of identity with the essence of God.

#### AL-GHAZĀLĪ

Rahman<sup>118</sup> was not the first to say that al-Ghazālī often contradicts himself, for Ibn Sab'īn (d. 669/1270) had earlier said the same emphatically.<sup>119</sup> In his *Ma'ārij al-quds*, which may or may not be by him,<sup>120</sup> al-Ghazālī follows Ibn Sīnā in saying that the “thinking part” of the soul may attain the stage of the *intellectus acquisitus*, which in turn may be identified with the *intellectus sanctus*.<sup>121</sup> In some unspecified way the *intellectus sanctus* may be joined to the *intellectus agens*.<sup>122</sup> The act of cognition is described by

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 89:10 §9.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 107:9 §37.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 89:14–15 §10.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 90:4ff. §11.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 267:6, 267:12, 268:2.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 267:6–7.

<sup>118</sup> *Prophecy in Islam*, pp. 94–95.

<sup>119</sup> *Budd al-'arīf*, edited by Jūrj Kattūra (Beirut, 1978), p. 144:12ff.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Maurice Bouyges, *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres de al-Ghazali (Algazel)* (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1959), p. 89 no. 76.

<sup>121</sup> *Ma'ārij al-quds fī madārij ma'rīfat al-naḥs* (Cairo: Al-Maktaba al-tijārīya al-kubrā, n.d.), pp. 41–43.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43:-5: *ittaṣala bihi naw'an min al-ittiṣāl*.

al-Ghazālī, as by earlier writers, as being an act wherein the heart is a mirror reflecting knowledge.<sup>123</sup>

To a greater degree than Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī combines philosophy and mysticism. This is as true of his description of man as of his description of the mystical union. In regard to the latter, Ibn Ṭufayl's description appears to be a reworking of certain passages from al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār*, which he knew.<sup>124</sup> I quote here from Chapter Two of the *Mishkāt al-anwār*:<sup>125</sup>

Being is divided into two categories; the first is being as such, the second is being that derives its being from another. That which the being derives from another is only borrowed and has no existence of itself. Considering the second category of being, in its essence it is nothing, "no thing," since being that derives from another is not true being. God alone is true being; God alone is the true light. From this point the gnostics rise up from the miasma of metaphor to the peaks of reality and accomplish their ascent to heaven. They see God directly, realizing that there is no being other than God, and that "everything will perish save His countenance."<sup>126</sup>

They need not to wait for the Day of Resurrection to hear the summons of the Creator: "Whose is the sovereignty this day? It is God's the one, the almighty."<sup>127</sup> When the gnostics attain the heaven of reality, they are unanimous that in all being there is only the one true God.<sup>128</sup> Now among the gnostics are those who attain this state by intellectual gnosis, while there are others who attain it by mystical experience.<sup>129</sup> All the gnostics lose entirely their sense of multiplicity: they immerse themselves totally in singularity, wherein their power of reasoning is exhausted. They become bewildered, unable to think of anything save God, not even of themselves. Only God exists. They

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74:-2ff.; *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-'uthmānīya al-miṣrīya, 1352/1933), III, 12-13.

<sup>124</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, p. 17:11; other books of al-Ghazālī which were known to him Ibn Ṭufayl quotes in *ibid.*, pp. 15:8-17:10.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Hellmut Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1955), p. 603; Meier, *Bahā-i Walad*, pp. 125-28.

<sup>126</sup> *Mishkāt al-anwār*, edited by A. 'Afīfī (Cairo: Al-Dār al-qawmīya li-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-nashr, 1382/1964), p. 55:7-14. For the Qur'ānic quotation at the end of this passage, see Sūrat al-Qiṣaṣ (28), v. 88.

<sup>127</sup> *Mishkāt al-anwār*, p. 56:5-6. The summons is from Sūrat Ghāfir (40), v. 16.

<sup>128</sup> Quoted in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, p. 120:11-12; cf. also *Mishkāt al-anwār*, p. 92:9; and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, p. 123:2-3.

<sup>129</sup> I.e. 'irfānān 'ilmīyan and ḥālan dhawqīyan; cf. p. 181 and n. 146 below.

become so intoxicated that their reason loses control. Thus one shouts: "I am the Truth;" and another cries: "Praise to me, how exalted is my standing!;" a third: "Only God is in the cowl."<sup>130</sup>

The words lovers use in their passion are expunged and not repeated to others. When their passion has cooled, they become again the prey of reason, which is the way God makes judgment on earth. They understand that that which they experienced was not the real union (*ittihād*), but only something resembling it.<sup>131</sup> Thus might the lover, in the ecstasy of his passion, say: "I am he whom I love and he whom I love is I."<sup>132</sup> Likewise, a man glancing by chance at a mirror may not see the mirror and not recognize himself that the image comes from the mirror. Or else, he may see wine in a glass and believe the glass to be the color of the wine, saying:

The glass was beautiful and wine was clear;  
They so resembled each other that the matter was  
obscure,  
As if it were wine and not glass,  
And glass and not wine.

Now there is a difference between the poet saying: "The wine is glass," and his saying: "As if it were glass." Thus when the mystical experience becomes overpowering, it will be called in regard to man a passing-away (*fanā'*), or even the passing-away of the passing-away (*fanā' al-fanā'*).<sup>133</sup> This is because he has annihilated himself and his passing-away has passed away; in this state he is no longer aware of himself and is not even aware that he is not aware. This latter is because if he were aware of not being aware, he would indeed be aware. In regard to the being in whom the mystic immerses himself, this union is called *ittihād* in the language of metaphor, in the language of reality it is *tawhīd*.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>130</sup>Here p. 165 and nn. 3–4; Ibn Ṭufayl quotes the same three dicta as al-Ghazālī.

<sup>131</sup>Quoted in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 122:10–11. Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, however, recognizes that his *unio* was a real ontological one. This is possible because the essence of man is identical with the essence of God. For al-Ghazālī the essence of man, compared with God's essence, is a true nothing.

<sup>132</sup>This verse is quoted from the *Dīwān* of al-Ḥallāj, edited by Louis Massignon in *Journal asiatique*, 1931, p. 92.

<sup>133</sup>See n. 44 above.

<sup>134</sup>*Mishkāt al-anwār*, p. 57:2–58:4.



I shall try tentatively to explain what this means. *Ittiḥād* presupposes that the one who is uniting with another is himself a real being. However, in that *ittiḥād* which is the mystical union there is only one real being, God, who is alone the actor (as required by the doctrine of *tawḥīd*). Therefore, in the language of metaphor, the creature unites with God (*ittiḥād*), but in the language of reality God unites with Himself (*tawḥīd*). Whereas for Ibn Ṭufayl *ittiḥād/tawḥīd* means the absorption of the particular divine spark in man into the general divinity, the absorption of like by like,<sup>135</sup> for al-Ghazālī it is the absorption of a pseudo-being, a created being, into the only real being, God.

This becomes even clearer if one considers al-Ghazālī's conception of man, in which he combines philosophy with Ṣūfism.<sup>136</sup> He variously describes the essence of man using such words as *rūḥ*, *nafs*, *qalb*, and *'aql*.<sup>137</sup> Thus in *Al-Ma'ārif al-'aqlīya*<sup>138</sup> he uses *al-'aql* and *al-nafs al-nāṭiqā*, while in the third book of the *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* he uses mainly the Ṣūfī term *al-qalb*.<sup>139</sup> In the *Mishkāt al-anwār*, he prefers *'aql*,<sup>140</sup> although in the work's third chapter he uses *rūḥ*.<sup>141</sup> Whatever the term used, man's essence is created<sup>142</sup> from the world of *malakūt*.<sup>143</sup> Man's essence is patterned upon (*anmūdḥaj*) the divine light,<sup>144</sup> but is not of the same essence as God's.

For crucial parts of his *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān* Ibn Ṭufayl probably used al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-anwār* as his model. Altogether he had a positive opinion of al-Ghazālī.<sup>145</sup> The latter's description of the mystical union is a combination of philosophy and Ṣūfism, just as in his description of man. However, in al-Ghazālī the Ṣūfī element is even more predominant than in Ibn Sīnā. Al-Ghazālī describes the union as being the passing away of the human essence in God. There are two paths to union, the sober way of intellectual gnosis (*al-'irfān al-'ilmī*), and the way of spontaneous mystical experience (*dhawq*) without scholarly preparation (*ta'allum*).<sup>146</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Fritz Meier, *Die Fawā'id al-ḡamāl wa-fawā'id al-ḡalāl des Naḡm ad-Dīn al-Kubrā* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1957), pp. 75–77.

<sup>136</sup> Ibn Sab'īn will reproach him with this; see n. 155 below.

<sup>137</sup> *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, III, 3; *Ma'ārij al-quḍs*, p. 13:–2f.

<sup>138</sup> *Al-Ma'ārif al-'aqlīya*, edited by 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān (Damascus: Dār al-fikr, 1383/1963), pp. 37, 38, 39.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. n. 137 above.

<sup>140</sup> *Mishkāt al-anwār*, p. 43:–5ff.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.

<sup>142</sup> *Al-Ma'ārif al-'aqlīya*, pp. 42, 45.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48. Cf. the view of al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, n. 113 above.

<sup>144</sup> *Mishkāt al-anwār*, p. 44:10.

<sup>145</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*, p. 18:3–6.

<sup>146</sup> *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, III, 18–19, 23.

## IBN BĀJJA AND IBN RUSHD

We may now turn from al-Ghazālī to his critics, Ibn Bājja and Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198). Ibn Bājja was familiar with the mystical union, which was for him the union of the *intellectus in actu* (*al-‘aql bi-l-fi‘l*) with the *intellectus agens*.<sup>147</sup> It results from the gift of God (*hibat Allāh*),<sup>148</sup> but man can attain it only if he devotes himself to philosophical reasoning.<sup>149</sup> Ibn Bājja explains that the part of man that unites in the mystical union, namely, the *intellectus in actu*,<sup>150</sup> is a gift from God. The decisive point here is that there is only one *intellectus in actu*,<sup>151</sup> which is shared by all men. In defining the union as the goal of human reasoning, Ibn Bājja necessarily rejects the Ṣūfī concept of union.<sup>152</sup> For him, what the Ṣūfīs believe to be the union is nothing but vague imaginings (*khayālāt*),<sup>153</sup> the product of inferior forms of reasoning,<sup>154</sup> the result of self-delusions. He judges the mystical experiences of al-Ghazālī in the same way, reproving him for enjoying them (*ladhdha*).<sup>155</sup>

It is notable that Ibn Ṭufayl plays down the harsh criticism by Ibn Bājja of al-Ghazālī and Ṣūfism in general.<sup>156</sup>

Ibn Ṭufayl’s friend and contemporary, Ibn Rushd, was also familiar with the possibility of the union. Like Ibn Bājja, Ibn Rushd regarded it as a gift from God which could only be achieved by way of reasoning. Since the Ṣūfīs eschew reason, the union which they experience is but a figment of their imagination. Ibn Rushd is very precise on this:

By self-mortification man can reach a point when one might say his spirit soars heavenwards. This is a gift from God, and

<sup>147</sup> *Tadbīr al-mutawahhid*, in Fakhrī, *Rasā’il ilāhīya*, pp. 50:6–7, 55:1–16, 79pu–80:2; *Ittiṣāl*, pp. 166:9–167:3, 171:–7–172:4, 173:1.

<sup>148</sup> *Ittiṣāl*, p. 173:1.

<sup>149</sup> *Tadbīr al-mutawahhid*, pp. 55:1–16, 91:–3.

<sup>150</sup> *Ittiṣāl*, p. 160:–3.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Merlan, *Monopsychism*, p. 56 n. 1. Cf. Themistius (d. ca. AD 388), *De anima*, edited by Richard Heinze (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1899), p. 103:36ff.; Latin translation edited by G. Verbeke (Louvain and Paris, 1957), p. 235:12ff. See also Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), *De unitate intellectus*, Chapters 4 and 5; Bernd Radtke, “*Unio mystica* und *Coniunctio*. Mystisches Erleben und philosophische Erkenntnis im Islam,” *Saeculum*, 41 (1990), pp. 59–60.

<sup>152</sup> *Tadbīr al-mutawahhid*, p. 55; *Ittiṣāl*, p. 171:–4f.; *Risālat al-wadā’*, in Fakhrī, *Rasā’il ilāhīya*, pp. 121:5–14, 124:2–16.

<sup>153</sup> *Ittiṣāl*, p. 171:–3.

<sup>154</sup> *Tadbīr al-mutawahhid*, pp. 55:1–16.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55:–5; *Wadā’*, p. 121:5; against *ladhdha* mostly *Wadā’*, p. 124:7–16. Ibn Sab’īn shared this critical opinion of al-Ghazālī, adding that the latter considered subjective experiences of the soul to be objective truth; see the former’s *Budd al-‘arīf*, pp. 144:–9f., 130pu.

<sup>156</sup> *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 5:8–12.

it is to this union (*ittiḥād*) that the Ṣūfīs aspire. However, it is obvious that they never attained it, for to attain it requires that one be fully conversant with the rational sciences. What the Ṣūfīs attain only resembles this experience.<sup>157</sup>

With this I shall conclude my survey of the various philosophical theories about the mystical union. I was looking for the antecedents upon which Ibn Ṭufayl modelled his theory of the mystical union and his concomitant concept of man. In regard to the union, his greatest debt is to al-Ghazālī, from whom on occasion he appropriates whole sentences. For al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl, and to a degree also al-Kindī, the union is between man and God. In contrast, for al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Ibn Rushd, the union is only with the *intellectus agens*. Ibn Ṭufayl, in opposition to these latter three, considered the union a direct experience (*dhawq*), not a consequence of intellectual speculations. Furthermore, he considered *dhawq* superior to any form of intellectual union.

By contrast, al-Ghazālī and probably also Ibn Sīnā considered both types of union to be of equal rank. Moreover, Ibn Ṭufayl regarded the union as taking place between the individual divine being and the general divine essence, both of whom share the same substance. In this his sole predecessor was al-Kindī, with whose works, interestingly enough, Ibn Ṭufayl was apparently unfamiliar.

What of the other tradition to which Ibn Ṭufayl refers, that of the mystics? Here these questions will be raised: first, did the mystics know of the ontological union; second, did they describe this union by the term *ittiḥād*; and third, what were their conceptions of man?

Before attempting answers to these questions, I shall digress with a discussion of the *kalām* and Shī'ī *ghulūw*.

#### KALĀM

Islamic scholastic theology knew of only one form of knowledge of God, that attained by reasoning. Indeed, some theologians wished to impose reasoning as an obligation on every Muslim.<sup>158</sup> By contrast, in regard to the study of man the picture at first glance seems more complex. However, a closer look renders it less so.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>157</sup>Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīṣ kitāb al-naḥs*, edited by Aḥmad F. al-Ahwānī (Cairo: Maktabat al-nahḍa al-miṣriya, 1950), p. 95:8; cf. James Finnegan, "Texte arabe du *Peri nū* d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise," *Al-Mashriq*, 33 (1956), p. 170.

<sup>158</sup>Josef van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre des 'Aḍud ad-Dīn al-Īcī* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1965), pp. 302ff.

<sup>159</sup>Materials are given in Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, pp. 339–50.

Judging by their arguments, the scholastics were closer than the philosophers to the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. In the language of the *ḥadīth*,<sup>160</sup> man's essence is called *al-nafs* or *al-rūḥ*.<sup>161</sup> Although the essence itself is invisible, physical attributes are ascribed to it.<sup>162</sup>

The varying views of the scholastics may be found recorded and summarized in al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935),<sup>163</sup> al-Maqdisī (wr. 355/956),<sup>164</sup> Abū Ya'lā (d. 458/1065),<sup>165</sup> and the *qādī* 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025).<sup>166</sup> Man's essence is variously described; thus, for example, al-Nazzām (d. 231/845) calls it *al-rūḥ*,<sup>167</sup> which is a body.<sup>168</sup> For Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir (d. 210/825) man is both body and *ruh*.<sup>169</sup> For Mu'ammār (d. 215/830) man is an indivisible non-physical thing,<sup>170</sup> which he sometimes calls *al-nafs*.<sup>171</sup> Yet others call man an atom—that is, an invisible particle.<sup>172</sup> For Ibn al-Rāwandī (d. ca. 245/859?) man is a thing within the heart (*al-qalb*), but it is not the *rūḥ*.<sup>173</sup> Only the Imāmī theologian Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (d. before 190/805) seems to present a more "spiritualized" concept, namely that man properly is the *rūḥ* which is a light. However, about the nature and origin of this light nothing is said.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Cf. the survey in al-Maqdisī (wr. 355/956), *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, edited and translated by Clement Huart (Paris: Ernest Laroux, 1899–1916), II, 102:–6–112:6.

<sup>161</sup> Abundant materials are provided in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīya (d. 751/1350), *Kitāb al-rūḥ* (Cairo, 1386/1966). Cf. also Duncan B. Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam," *Acta Orientalia*, 9 (1931), pp. 307ff.; Ibn Taymīya (d. 728/1328), *Risāla fī l-'aql wa-l-rūḥ*, in *Majmū'at al-rasā'il al-munīriya*, II (Beirut, 1970), pp. 20ff.

<sup>162</sup> Only one example: al-Maqdisī, *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 103–104.

<sup>163</sup> *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, edited by Hellmut Ritter (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1929ff.), p. 329:8ff.

<sup>164</sup> *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 121ff.

<sup>165</sup> *Al-Mu'tamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, edited by W. Ḥaddād (Beirut: Dār al-mashriq, 1974), p. 93:19ff.

<sup>166</sup> *Al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-'adl* (Cairo: Al-Dār al-miṣrīya li-l-ta'līf wa-l-tarjama, 1382/1962ff.), XI, 310:4ff.

<sup>167</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, p. 331:9.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229:14ff.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331:13; = al-Maqdisī, *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 120:–2ff.; Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, pp. 339–40.

<sup>171</sup> Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, p. 341.

<sup>172</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, p. 332:4.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332:7. This contradicts al-Maqdisī, *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 121pu, where it is said that "man" is the quantum of *rūḥ* which is in the heart. Cf. also 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, XI, 311.

<sup>174</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, p. 331:3ff.; al-Maqdisī, *Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 121:8; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, XI, 310:12; Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, pp. 348–49; now Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991–proceeding), I, 368.

This short summary will hopefully suffice to show that Ibn Ṭufayl did not have any forerunners among these thinkers.

#### THE GHULŪW OF THE SHĪ'A

The salient characteristic of the Shī'a is their determination to tie knowledge to authority. God is therefore known through the Imām. This is not a good starting point for the concept of an individual attaining the mystical union. It is, however, a good starting point for the divinization of certain men; thus the Imām's authority becomes divine authority.

These trends manifested themselves in the Shī'ī *ghulāt*, or "extremists," of the second/eighth century. The *ghulāt* usually designated the divine element in man as *al-rūḥ*, less often as *al-juz' al-ilāhī*.<sup>175</sup> The doctrine of the divinity of man is given in two versions. In the first, divinity is innate in the Imām;<sup>176</sup> that is, prophets and Imāms partake of God's essence, meaning that they partake of God Himself. In the second, man's spirit in general partakes of the divine nature.<sup>177</sup> This latter doctrine permeates the profoundly gnostic *Umm al-kitāb*.<sup>178</sup> Although some aspects of these ideas are close to those of Ibn Ṭufayl, there is no causal relationship.

#### Ṣūfism

Even more than in the study of philosophy, the study of Ṣūfism requires the closest possible critical evaluation of the relevant texts. The latter fall into two categories, the first being either written by the Ṣūfis themselves or recorded by persons close to them. The second are those written by opponents and outsiders who lacked a correct understanding of Ṣūfism, such as Sunnī and Shī'ī theologians.

Early Ṣūfī writings fall into three periods. The first is characterized by the words and sayings of single individuals. As in the case of the mystics of al-Baṣra this can be demonstrated by an examination of the

<sup>175</sup> Only al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal*, edited by Muḥammad Sayyid Kaylānī (Beirut: Dār al-ma'rifa, 1395/1975), I, 174:9, 189:3.

<sup>176</sup> Examples: al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, pp. 6:5, 14:3; al-Qummī (d. 300/913), *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa-l-firaq*, edited by Muḥammad J. Mashkūr (Tehran: Maṭba'at-i Ḥaydarī, 1963), pp. 26:-2ff., 42:-4, 54:6ff.; also Heinz Halm, "Das 'Buch der Schatten'. Die Mufaḍḍal-Tradition der Gulāt und die Ursprünge des Nuṣairiertums," *Der Islam*, 58 (1981), pp. 19, 21, with literature.

<sup>177</sup> Al-Qummī, *Al-Maqālāt wa-l-firaq*, pp. 54:10ff., 62:8ff.

<sup>178</sup> Halm, "Das 'Buch der Schatten'," p. 55.

*isnāds*, in which there is one main transmitter, Ja'far ibn Sulaymān al-Dubā'ī (d. 178/794).<sup>179</sup> The next stage was represented by collections of the sayings of the mystics, arranged according to subject: *tawakkul*, *maḥabba*, *karam*, *akhlāq*, *mawt*, etc. Here one can mention al-Burjulānī (d. 238/852),<sup>180</sup> al-Khuttalī (d. ca. 260/874),<sup>181</sup> and above all, Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281/894).<sup>182</sup> In these works there is no attempt to organize the material. However, a third period is represented by another group of writings dating from the third/ninth century which differ considerably, being organized as treatises (called *risāla* or *mas'ala*) in which authors give their own opinions about the issues in question. The first to write in this manner was al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857),<sup>183</sup> whose most famous successor in the third/ninth century was al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 299/910).<sup>184</sup> One may mention also al-Junayd (d. 298/910)<sup>185</sup> and Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899).<sup>186</sup> These early stages culminated in the fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh centuries with the great collections and compilations. In the manuals of al-Kalābādhī (d. 380/990),<sup>187</sup> al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988),<sup>188</sup> and al-Makkī (d. 386/996),<sup>189</sup> sayings and other discussions from the past were brought together and put into order. Other works, such those by Abū Nu'aym (d. 430/1038)<sup>190</sup> and al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021),<sup>191</sup> are simply compilations.

Naturally the authors of the fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh centuries do not present a wholly objective picture of Ṣūfism. It was a picture in which matters that were deemed inopportune were simply suppressed or cited without a name attached. Furthermore, there was a tendency towards harmonizing the picture so that Ṣūfism is presented as a uniform stream of thought which existed as such from the very beginning. Therefore, it is necessary to go back to the writings of the masters of the third/ninth cen-

<sup>179</sup>Cf. al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *Mizān al-i'tidāl*, edited by 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1382/1963), I, 408 no. 1505. In Abū Nu'aym (d. 430/1038), *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-sa'āda, AH 1352ff.), he appears more than 70 times as a transmitter.

<sup>180</sup>GAS, I, 638 no. 8.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 645 no. 16.

<sup>182</sup>Cf. the list in *The Noble Qualities of Character by Ibn Abī d-Dunyā*, edited by James Bellamy (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), 8.

<sup>183</sup>GAS, I, 639–42 no. 11.

<sup>184</sup>Bernd Radtke, *Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. Ein islamischer Theosoph des 3./9. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1980), pp. 39ff.; cf. also below, n. 230.

<sup>185</sup>GAS, I, 647–50 no. 21.

<sup>186</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 646 no. 18.

<sup>187</sup>*Al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, edited by A.J. Arberry (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-sa'āda, 1352/1933). See GAS, I, 668 no. 50.

<sup>188</sup>*Luma'*; GAS, I, 666 no. 45.

<sup>189</sup>*Qūt al-qulūb* (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'a al-miṣrīya, 1351/1932). See GAS, I, 666 no. 45.

<sup>190</sup>I.e. the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*; see GAL, GI, 362.

<sup>191</sup>His *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, Ms. Fatih 262; also his *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfīya*, edited by N. Shuraybā (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1372/1953). See GAS, I, 671 no. 53.

tury. Unfortunately, the sources are few and some of the relevant editions are unreliable.

Despite the assertions by some Muslim scholars and modern writers, the Ṣūfīs never used the term *ittiḥād* to describe the mystical union.<sup>192</sup> They used such terms as *fanā'*, *talāshī*, and among those in Baghdad, *jam'*. Other terms that were used included *wuṣūl*, *wiṣāl*, *ittiṣāl*, or *tawḥīd*. It is non-Ṣūfīs—such as the Shī'ī Ibn al-Dā'ī (fl. late fifth/eleventh c.),<sup>193</sup> the philosopher Ibn Sīnā,<sup>194</sup> and the theologian al-Ghazālī<sup>195</sup>—who ascribe the use of *ittiḥād* to the Ṣūfīs.

If this is so, then what did the Ṣūfīs understand by the mystical union? What did they mean by *fanā'*, *talāshī*, and *ittiṣāl*? And what or who disappeared, what or who passed away, how or in whom? The latter question leads to the study of the nature of man.

The Ḥanbalī Abū Ya'lā asserts that a group of Ṣūfīs taught that the spirit (*rūḥ*) was not created, but eternal.<sup>196</sup> The Mu'tazilī historian al-Maqdisī maintains that he heard the same from a person from Fārs.<sup>197</sup> We are not told who these persons or groups were. Although Abū Ya'lā and al-Maqdisī were not themselves Ṣūfīs, they may have reported correctly, not the least because the Ṣūfī writers themselves underline the importance of this issue. This latter, called the *mas'alat al-rūḥ*,<sup>198</sup> is extensively discussed, for example, by al-Jullābī (d. 469/1079).<sup>199</sup> The same issue is considered by al-Sulamī<sup>200</sup> and al-Sarrāj,<sup>201</sup> significantly, under the rubric of *ghalaṭāt al-ṣūfiyya*, "the errors of the Ṣūfīs," wherein they treat of matters they wish to exclude from "orthodox" Ṣūfism. Unfortunately, neither of these two writers provides names when he lists errors concerning the *rūḥ*. These mistakes include the following beliefs:

### 1. The *rūḥ* is a light from the light of God.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>192</sup>Cf. also Fritz Meier, "Die Wandlung des Menschen im mystischen Islam," *Erano-Jahrbuch*, 23 (1954), pp. 104–105.

<sup>193</sup>*Tabṣīrat al-'awāmm fī ma'rīfat maqālāt al-anām*, edited by 'Abbās-i Iqbāl (Tehran: Shirkat-i intishārāt-i asāṭīr, SH 1313), p. 122.

<sup>194</sup>Above, p. 176.

<sup>195</sup>Above, pp. 180–81.

<sup>196</sup>*Mu'tamad*, p. 100:15–16.

<sup>197</sup>*Al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 90:–4ff.

<sup>198</sup>Richard Hartmann, "Zur Frage nach der Herkunft und den Anfängen des Sufitums," *Der Islam*, 6 (1916), pp. 36ff.

<sup>199</sup>*Kashf al-mahjūb*, edited and translated by V. Shukovsky and R.A. Nicholson (Tehran, SH 1336/Leiden and London, 1911), pp. 335:3ff. (text), 261ff. (trans.).

<sup>200</sup>*Uṣūl al-malāmatīya wa-ghalaṭāt al-ṣūfiyya*, edited by 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Maḥmūd (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-irshād, 1405/1985), p. 193:–2ff.

<sup>201</sup>*Luma'*, pp. 434–35.

<sup>202</sup>Al-Sarrāj, *Luma'*, p. 434ult–435:1; al-Sulamī, *Ghalaṭāt*, p. 193:–2f. Cf. the doctrine held by Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, as above, n. 174.

2. The *rūḥ* is a life from the life of God.<sup>203</sup>
3. The *rūḥ* is created, but the *rūḥ al-qudus* is of the essence of God.<sup>204</sup>
4. The *rūḥ* of ordinary mortals is created, but the *rūḥ* of the elect is uncreated.<sup>205</sup>
5. The *rūḥ* is eternal; it does not die; it is neither punished nor led into temptation.<sup>206</sup>
6. The *rūḥ* migrates from body to body.<sup>207</sup>
7. The unbeliever has one *rūḥ*, the believer three; the prophets and particular friends of God have five.<sup>208</sup>
8. The *rūḥ* is created from light.<sup>209</sup>
9. The *rūḥ* is a spirit created from the *malakūt*, to which it returns when purified.<sup>210</sup>
10. There are two kinds of *rūḥ*: a divine *rūḥ* and a mortal *rūḥ*.<sup>211</sup>

Some or all of these teachings were apparently propounded at one time or another by some Ṣūfī group or persons. Some of the teachings about, for example, the divinity of the *rūḥ* or of the *rūḥ* of a chosen group or metempsychosis, show an affinity with extreme Shīʿī views. Others are closer to philosophical views, such as that holding that the *rūḥ* is light or that it comes from the world of *malakūt*. "Orthodox" Ṣūfis, following al-Junayd of Baghdad, rejected all of these teachings.<sup>212</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:1–2; not in al-Sulamī.

<sup>204</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:2–3; al-Sulamī, *Ghalaṭāt*, p. 193ult–194:1; cf. al-Qummī, *Al-Maqālāt wa-l-firaq*, p. 42:8ff.

<sup>205</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:2–3; al-Sulamī, *Ghalaṭāt*, p. 194:1–2; cf. the doctrines of the *rūḥ* of the Imāms held by the Shīʿī *ghulāt*, p. 185 and n. 175 above.

<sup>206</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:4; not in al-Sulamī.

<sup>207</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:4–5; not in al-Sulamī. Doctrines on the transmigration of souls were held mostly by the Shīʿī *ghulāt*; cf. the materials given in Rainer Freitag, *Seelenwanderung in der islamische Häresie* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1985), pp. 9ff.

<sup>208</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:5–6; al-Sulamī, *Ghalaṭāt*, p. 194:2–3. The literature of the Shīʿī *ghulāt* also names five *arwāḥ*; cf. Halm, "Das 'Buch der Schatten'," p. 26 and n. 37. Five *arwāḥ*, although others than those given by the Shīʿī *ghulāt*, are listed in al-Ghazālī, *Mishkāt al-anwār*, pp. 76–77.

<sup>209</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:6; not in al-Sulamī. Cf. also no. 1 in this list.

<sup>210</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:7–8; not in al-Sulamī. Cf. above, pp. 172 n. 56 (al-Kindī), 178 (al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl), 181 (al-Ghazālī).

<sup>211</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Lumaʿ*, p. 435:8; not in al-Sulamī.

<sup>212</sup> Meier, *Die Fawāʾiḥ al-ġamāl*, pp. 171–72.



But with certain persons or groups do we not find signs pointing in the direction indicated by al-Sarrāj and al-Sulamī? Thus, in the mysticism of Ibn Ṭufayl's younger contemporary, Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 618/1221), who lived at the other end of the Muslim world in Khwārizm, is found the notion of the divine spark, and that the two persons become one in the union.<sup>213</sup> And al-Kubrā, through his teacher 'Ammār al-Bidlīsī (fl. ca. 590/1194), stands unquestionably in the Ṣūfī tradition.

Examples from these persons or groups may throw light on the way precedents for Ibn Ṭufayl's ideas may be found within Ṣūfism.

Khushaysh (d. 253/867),<sup>214</sup> whose attitude towards Ṣūfism was distant, if not downright hostile, is reported by al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987) to count among the heretics (*zanādiqa*)<sup>215</sup> several groups whom he calls *rūḥānīya*:

They are so called because they believe that their spirits (*ar-wāḥuhum*) see the *malakūt* of the heavens, that they see the pasture of paradise, and further, that they have sexual intercourse with the houris. Furthermore, they believe that they wander with their spirits in paradise. They are also called *fikrīya* because they meditate and believe that in their meditation they can reach God in reality. Thus they make their meditation the object of their devotions and of their striving towards God. In their meditation they see this goal by means of their spirit, through God speaking to them directly, passing his hand gently over them, and—as they believe—looking upon them directly, while they have intercourse with the houris and dally with them as they lay upon their couches, and while eternally young boys bring them food and drink and exquisite fruit.<sup>216</sup>

Khushaysh continues with other reports about different groups of *rūḥānīya* in which various names, Kulayb, Rabāḥ, and Ibn Ḥayyān are mentioned. At least one of these, Rabāḥ al-Qaysī may be linked to the passage quoted above. I shall say no more about Kulayb and Ibn Ḥayyān,<sup>217</sup> but rather shall concentrate on Rabāḥ.

According to Khushaysh there was a group of mystics who believed that a real encounter with God was possible in this world. This encounter or

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75ff. Cf. also n. 135 above.

<sup>214</sup> *GAS*, I, 600 no. 4.

<sup>215</sup> For this term, cf. Georges Vajda, "Les zindiqs en pays d'Islam au début de la période abbaside," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, 17 (1938), pp. 173ff.

<sup>216</sup> *Al-Tanbīh w-l-radd 'alā ahl al-ahwā' wa-l-bida'*, edited by Sven Dederling (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1936), p. 73:14ff.

<sup>217</sup> This is certainly not the famous Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (d. 200/815?), as Louis Massignon thought. See his *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, 2nd edition (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1954), p. 154.

vision is experienced by the *rūḥ*. What Khushaysh reports is strongly permeated by anthropomorphic ideas, and recalls similar reports about Shī'ī *ghulāt*.<sup>218</sup> If we are right in assuming that Rabāḥ al-Qaysī belonged to this group of *rūḥānīya*, then the latter may be located in al-Baṣra in the second/eighth century, since this is the place and time in which he lived. Although Rabāḥ apparently died in the late second/eighth century, he nevertheless took from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728).<sup>219</sup> If the theologians are to be believed, al-Baṣra was the home of a number of other mystics of the second/eighth century who also held anthropomorphic ideas.<sup>220</sup> Some of these mystics belonged to the circle of 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd (d. after 150/767),<sup>221</sup> a pupil of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. About the students of 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd, al-Sarrāj tells the following.<sup>222</sup> Some of his pupils left him because he was too strict. When 'Abd al-Wāḥid later met one of them, the pupil claimed that he and his companions entered paradise every night and rejoiced in its fruits. Here al-Sarrāj appears to confirm Khushaysh.

On this theme, the following may be relevant. 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Zayd's nephew, Bakr ibn Ukht 'Abd al-Wāḥid, is considered to be the founder of the school known as the Bakrīya.<sup>223</sup> Within this school the anthropomorphism of al-Baṣra seems to have been kept alive. Bakr taught<sup>224</sup> that on the day of resurrection God will create for Himself a physical form which mankind will see. Although Bakr identified man with the *rūḥ*,<sup>225</sup> what he meant is unclear. Did he understand by *rūḥ* the same thing as the *rūḥānīya*

<sup>218</sup>Cf. Halm, "Das 'Buch der Schatten'," pp. 31–32.

<sup>219</sup>Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, VI, 194.

<sup>220</sup>Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, p. 214:4ff.

<sup>221</sup>Massignon, *Essai*, pp. 214–15; Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, II, 159; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḥ al-Islām*, edited by Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Qudṣī (Cairo, 1947ff.), VI, 243ff.; *idem*, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, edited by Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūṭ *et al.* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-risāla, 1401–1404/1981–84), VII, 178 no. 59; now van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II, 96–100.

<sup>222</sup>*Luma'*, p. 429:2ff.

<sup>223</sup>Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, pp. 286–87; Charles Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ḡāḥiz* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953), p. 103. He can hardly be identical with Bakr ibn Ziyād al-Bāhilī (named in al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i'tidāl*, I, 345 no. 1281), as Nader thought; see his edition of al-Khayyāṭ (d. late third/ninth c.), *Kitāb al-intiṣār wa-l-radd 'alā Ibn al-Rāwandī al-mulḥid* (Beirut: Editions des lettres orientales, 1957), Arabic text, p. 141 n. 121; cf. also Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, p. 95. Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) gives his name as Bakr al-'Ammī in his *Ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, translated by Gerard Lecomte as *Le traité des divergences du ḥadīth* (Damascus: Institut français, 1962), pp. 52–53. Those bearing this *nisba* are very often from al-Baṣra; cf. al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1167), *Al-Ansāb* (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-'uthmānīya, 1382/1962ff.), s.n.; Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), *Al-Lubāb fī tahdhīb al-ansāb* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), s.n.. See also now van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II, 108–109.

<sup>224</sup>Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, pp. 216:6–7, 287:6–7.

<sup>225</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 287:8; Daiber, *Mu'ammār*, p. 346.

of al-Baṣra, although we do not know if they existed, or even if they did, what they meant by *rūḥ*? Or did he mean what al-Nazzām meant?<sup>226</sup>

From al-Baṣra we turn east, to Khurāsān and Transoxania, skirting Baghdad, the home of "Western" Ṣūfism in the third/ninth century. The head of Baghdad Ṣūfism, al-Junayd, forbade discussion of the *rūḥ*.<sup>227</sup> Al-Ḥallāj, whom I shall not discuss here, was an exception.<sup>228</sup>

Of the Transoxanian mystics, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's writings are fortunately almost entirely extant.<sup>229</sup> Al-Tirmidhī died in Tirmidh<sup>230</sup> in around 299/910. On the pilgrimage he visited Baghdad, al-Kūfa, al-Baṣra, and the Ḥijāz. Although he was familiar with the writings and terminology of al-Muḥāsibī, al-Tirmidhī's system is entirely his own. I would call his system a pristine Islamic theosophy, untouched by the Aristotelian Neoplatonism presented by the translations, unlike, for example, al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl.

In his conception of man, al-Tirmidhī recognizes three centers within the body: the head, the heart or breast, and the belly and below. The head is the seat of both the '*aql* and *rūḥ*; of these the '*aql* is the intellectual faculty of differentiation,<sup>231</sup> the *rūḥ* the principle of life, without passion or lust. The enemy of the '*aql* and *rūḥ* is the carnal totality, comprising the "soul" (*nafs*), "lust" (*shahwa*), and other lower instincts (*hawā*), which together have their seat in the belly and below. Both elements, the higher and the lower, are in conflict for the light of the *ma'rifa* or *tawḥīd* hidden within the heart. The latter is understood by al-Tirmidhī to be a substratum of the light of the divine attributes. This he sometimes calls *ḥaẓẓ Allāh*, a part of God granted to man by God's grace.<sup>232</sup> The '*aql* is able to recognize this light if man can sufficiently subdue his lower soul and instincts, meaning that he is able to recognize God through His attributes. God Himself in His substance cannot be recognized. Here al-Tirmidhī may have been influenced by Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (d. 128/745) and some diffuse Neoplatonic ideas.<sup>233</sup> Here there is a contrast with Ibn Ṭufayl, for whom, following a

<sup>226</sup> As Daiber thinks; cf. his *Mu'ammār*, p. 346.

<sup>227</sup> See n. 212 above.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. the feature given in Fritz Meier, "Ein wichtiger Handschriftenfund zur Ṣufik," *Oriens*, 20 (1967), pp. 104–105.

<sup>229</sup> Radtke, *Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī*, pp. 39ff.

<sup>230</sup> The biographical dates given by Annemarie Schimmel in her *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 92, are incorrect. She has obviously confused al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī with al-Kattānī, who like al-Tirmidhī had the name Muḥammad ibn 'Alī. Al-Kattānī died in 320/932 in Mecca.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. also the materials given in Josef van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977), pp. 56–58.

<sup>232</sup> Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Majmū'a*, Ms. Leipzig 212, fol. 37v:6: *qad qasama lahu ḥaẓẓan min nafsihi*.

<sup>233</sup> Radtke, "Theosophie," pp. 163–64.

Mu'tazilī tradition, the substance and attributes of God were one and the same.<sup>234</sup> In striving to know God; the 'aql reaches a boundary between the attributes and the substance of God; at this point it comes to a halt. Al-Tirmidhī calls this stage *tahātur al-'aql* or *al-talāshī*; here, man is in the grip of God (*fī qabḍatihi*). His ego is suspended; God acts within him. When he sees, hears, reaches out, etc., it is God who sees, hears, reaches out, etc. Al-Tirmidhī does not consider whether this is the ontological union; such speculations were foreign to him. But the union as described by al-Tirmidhī does not imply the coming together of two separate identifies, God and man, since man is in effect absorbed into God. This union thus goes beyond the process of cognition, because the knower is extinguished by the act of the union.<sup>235</sup>

For al-Tirmidhī, as for most of the mystics who were his contemporaries, the seat and organ of man's higher self is the heart (*qalb*).<sup>236</sup> A somewhat different perception is that of Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī, one of the most interesting mystics of the third-fourth/ninth-tenth centuries. Al-Wāsiṭī was educated in Baghdad within the circle of al-Junayd. He later moved east and taught in Marw, where he died after 320/932.<sup>237</sup>

For al-Wāsiṭī the kernel of man is the *rūḥ*, a subtle substance (*jawhar laṭīf*)<sup>238</sup> which is apart from the normal functions of life, but which is nevertheless created.<sup>239</sup> Communion with God (*ṣuḥba*) is only possible through the *rūḥ*, a communion that took place before the creation of the world.<sup>240</sup> Before the creation, the spirits experienced direct illumination and direct speech from God.<sup>241</sup> Al-Wāsiṭī continues by presenting in a modified form the notion of the three different types of *rūḥ*, a notion rejected by al-Sarrāj.<sup>242</sup> Thus he distinguishes between the *rūḥ* of the prophet, that of the pious, and that of ordinary people.<sup>243</sup>

In seeking to tie these arguments together, we must not neglect the various definitions of union and *tawḥīd* in the *Kitāb al-luma'* of al-Sarrāj. Al-Junayd defines *tawḥīd* as implying:

that before God man becomes a phantom, subject to the decisions resulting from the divine dispositions which arise from

<sup>234</sup>See above, p. 169 and n. 43.

<sup>235</sup>Radtke, *Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī*, p. 74; *idem*, "Theosophie," p. 164.

<sup>236</sup>The number of proofs is very large. See Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, II, 73ff.; also n. 52 above.

<sup>237</sup>*GAS*, I, 659–60 no. 27.

<sup>238</sup>Al-Sulamī, *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, fol. 116r:1.

<sup>239</sup>*Ibid.*, fol. 123a:4.

<sup>240</sup>*Ibid.*, fol. 45a:2.

<sup>241</sup>*Ibid.*, fol. 160a:-5.

<sup>242</sup>See above, p. 188 no. 7 and n. 208.

<sup>243</sup>*Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr*, fol. 123a:-8ff.

His omnipotence from within the unfathomable depths of His *tawhīd*. Therein man's self is annihilated,<sup>244</sup> as is his pretension that he can create something. Likewise, his expectation that God will hear him is annihilated, because for man God's uniqueness in God's nearness is alone real. In this state all man's sensual perceptions and actions pass away, because God acts for him in those matters which God demands from him. This means that man's end returns to his beginning so that he is that which he was before he was.<sup>245</sup>

Behind these characteristically cryptic words of al-Junayd, I think, lies the same meaning as described by al-Ghazālī, namely, that the union is the annihilation of man's phantom existence in which man becomes that which he was before he was, a nothing.

### Conclusion

We may now return to the three questions raised earlier:

1. The term *ittihād* is not generally attested in Ṣūfī literature; rather, the Ṣūfīs use *fanā'*, *talāshī*, or *tawhīd*. This is at least the case with the Ṣūfīs of the third–fifth/ninth–eleventh centuries.
2. It is possible that certain groups of mystics of the second/eighth centuries believed that a divine spark existed within man, an idea similar to some of those held by certain contemporary extreme Shī'ī groups. The latter seem to have been influenced by vaguely gnostic or Manichean<sup>246</sup> ideas. Al-Baṣra in the same period may have been a center of this early mysticism that was possibly influenced by gnostic ideas. Al-Baṣra thus may have played for Ṣūfism the same role as al-Kūfa did for the Shī'a.
3. The Ṣūfīs of the following century rejected the gnostic and anthropomorphic elements, as did the Mu'tazila in the field of theology. The Ṣūfīs no longer accepted the doctrine of the divine spark. Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, who was not in any case representative of the Ṣūfīs of the period, retained some gnostic elements.

Classical Ṣūfism understood the mystical union to be the absorbing of the phantasmagoric human existence into the real existence of God. However,

<sup>244</sup> *bi-l-fanā'* 'an *nafsihi*; see n. 44 above.

<sup>245</sup> Al-Sarrāj, *Luma'*, p. 29:7–11.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. Heinz Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismā'īliya* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1978).

it must be stressed that the world view of classical Ṣūfism was not monistic and “emanationist,” but “creationist.”<sup>247</sup> Therefore, the union is the passing away of a created being into a real being. It is in this sense, and not in any allegedly pantheistic sense, that the theopathic utterances of al-Ḥallāj and others, quoted by al-Ghazālī and Ibn Ṭufayl, must be understood.

We may conclude that generalizations uncritically maintaining that “Ṣūfism” speaks of a union in the pantheistic sense are incorrect. It is possible to talk of a pantheistic ontological union in Ṣūfism only after the sixth/twelfth century, when under Neoplatonist influence<sup>248</sup> the “creationist” world view turned “emanationist,” represented by Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā<sup>249</sup> in the East and Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) in the West.

Ibn Ṭufayl’s world view is “emanationist.”<sup>250</sup> This distinguishes him from the Ṣūfīs before him, even those whom he quotes. He adopts their terminology, but not their system. Nothing is more misleading than to see the Ṣūfī masters of the third/ninth century as “pantheistic” predecessors of Ibn Ṭufayl. On the contrary, his ideas may well have cast down the seed for the monism of his compatriot, Ibn al-‘Arabī.

Thus Ibn Ṭufayl incorporated into his own thinking what he knew of Ṣūfism. He may even have rediscovered the doctrine of the divine spark in the “I am the Truth” (*anā l-ḥaqq*) dictum of al-Ḥallāj—mistakenly so. With his “true” predecessors—al-Kindī, the Shī‘ī *ghulāt*, the early Ṣūfīs—he was probably unfamiliar.

In his theological thinking, Ibn Ṭufayl follows a Mu‘tazilī tendency,<sup>251</sup> in noetics he follows the philosophers.<sup>252</sup> He saw the union as ontological; in this respect he may be regarded as an ancestor of later monistic mysticism.

<sup>247</sup>The opposite view is held by Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, p. 233.

<sup>248</sup>This is the Neoplatonism of the translation literature (*Plotiniana arabica*). It is not the old diffuse Neoplatonism which may be found in Jahm ibn Ṣafwān or al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī.

<sup>249</sup>Meier, *Die Fawā’ih al-ḡamāl*, p. 66.

<sup>250</sup>Cf. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, p. 208.

<sup>251</sup>See n. 234 above.

<sup>252</sup>Cf. Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, p. 105:7–8: *al-‘ārīf* = *al-ma‘rūf* = *al-ma‘rifā/al-‘ālim* = *al-ma‘lūm* = *al-‘ilm*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### JUSTIFICATIONS OF POETIC VALIDITY: IBN ṬUFAYL'S *ḤAYY IBN YAQẒĀN* AND IBN SĪNĀ'S *COMMENTARY ON THE POETICS OF ARISTOTLE*

Salim Kemal

(Pennsylvania State University)

Issues of what we would now call “philosophical aesthetics” are involved in understanding *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, even though they are not explicit in that text.<sup>1</sup> As one important expression of these issues is found in the works of Ibn Sīnā, one may turn to his writings on poetics and logic to clarify the conception of aesthetic validity that might be at work in our text. Ibn Sīnā's conception does not satisfy fully the needs of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, but it can be developed to do so.

#### *Fiction and Truth*

Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* is a “philosophical tale.”<sup>2</sup> It is a work of fiction that uses particular literary modes such as symbols, sense-imagery,

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<sup>1</sup>I am pleased to acknowledge support from the British Academy and from the IAHS, Pennsylvania State University, that enabled me to undertake some of the research incorporated into this paper. A version of some material was presented at the BRISMES conference at the University of Exeter in July 1987. I am grateful to Ian Netton for involving me in that conference and to Oliver Leaman for speaking on my paper at the conference. I am also grateful to Nabil Matar and Carl Hausman for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. For a broader discussion of some of the issues raised here, see my *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991).

<sup>2</sup>The text itself suggests quite early on why this form of a “philosophical tale” is necessary. Although it is the translator who describes the text as a philosophical tale, it seems to me that Ibn Ṭufayl's own explanations point to some such conception. From Ibn Bājjā, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Ṭufayl tells us, he has learned logic and the rules of reasoning, and he himself “would not have garnered what truth [he has] attained ... without pursuing the arguments of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā.” Yet the Truths he is concerned with lie some way beyond reason alone. Ibn Bājjā reached a certain level by the use of reason; beyond that is a state of ecstasy, one of a number of stages of a development that, in words Ibn Ṭufayl quotes approvingly from Ibn Sīnā, culminates

and so on, in order to convey meanings. These latter are capable of being assessed not only in terms of their effectiveness in relaying some direct knowledge of the Truth, but also by reference to aesthetic qualities. That is, in addition to a concern with the Truth, the narrative of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is structured also by a literary quality in order to give an appropriate form to the Truths contained in the text. To communicate these Truths we not only set out analyses, argument, and conclusion—that is, we do not merely order and organize the text so that it is constituted solely by arguments and reasoning—but we also follow aesthetic requirements. Accordingly, we may argue that we fail to explain the text completely by attending only to the Truths it contains, for the text is also and importantly a work of literary fiction that uses various literary devices, and we must also consider it for its aesthetic qualities.

Moreover, these latter are not merely arbitrary to the text or added externally as a kind of icing on the cake of Truth. Rather, aesthetic aspects are involved in making the text what it is, for they provide the manner most appropriate for communicating to its audience Truths that are “beyond reasoning,” so far as they aim for supra-rational understanding. Therefore, to understand the nature of the text, it is not enough to search out only its Truth, as if we could discard its fictive or aesthetic form and attend only to the resulting pure vision. Instead, to understand the access to Truth that the text gives us, we must comprehend its fictive and aesthetic form.

If the nature of the narrative is essential to what is narrated, and given that we are considering a literary work, we are faced with a problem. As a text considered aesthetically, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* possesses a validity or force that, in important respects, must seem independent of the validity claimed

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when the devotee’s “inmost being becomes a polished mirror facing toward the Truth. Sublime delight pours over him and he rejoices in his soul at all the marks it bears of Truth. At this level he sees both himself and the Truth. He still hesitates between them; but then, becoming oblivious to self, he is aware only of the Sacred Presence—or if he is at all aware of himself, it is only as one who gazes on the Truth. At this point communion is achieved.” See *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān: a Philosophical Tale*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Lenn Evan Goodman (New York: Twayne, 1972), pp. 18–20. The wisdom gained by such closeness to the Truth cannot be expressed in rational arguments alone. It is better described in terms of acquaintance with a friend whom we know very well but cannot describe easily (*ibid.*) If we are to grasp and communicate the Truth, we need a style that allows us to represent the cumulative meanings and implications of this Truth, yet without constraining such representation by the requirements of an earlier stage of mere reason. It seems that clear arguments and a philosophical style do not allow for the complex meanings that must be suggested to those who wish to grasp the multi-faceted Truth. Rather, the suggestion is, some other form becomes more appropriate to this rich grasp. To call this form a philosophical tale is to suggest that its Truths are conveyed in non-philosophical manner, and this paper will consider just how coherent and successful such a form can be.



for the Truths relayed through the story. Yet we have just argued that both kinds of validity are essential, that the text is the text it is because its Truths are most appropriately presented in this manner. Therefore, to make good the claim that our text must possess validity for both its Truth and its aesthetic qualities, we must show how aesthetic validity can be related to the validity ascribed to the text for its Truths. Only by doing so do we gain a satisfactory understanding of the structure and validity of the text as a whole. Yet, on the face of it, the two kinds of validity seem very different and are only contingently related—one is concerned with the aesthetic value of the text, the other with some deeper Truth. Further, aesthetic matters are notorious for having little concern with the Truth: the beauty of a work does not depend on the truthfulness of its content. Indeed, the pursuit of aesthetic value can occur at the price of failing to gain Truth. And it is not clear that its aesthetic validity can play a part in allowing the text to yield Truths, for the first seems so subjective that it is difficult to see how it might bear some essential link to objective Truths. Here, to understand the interplay between these senses of validity, we must examine how aesthetic validity allows us to accommodate Truth, for it is the subjective nature of aesthetic response that seems to exclude any such objective reference. In other words, there may be a number of other aspects of the text which we must grasp in addition to its aesthetic character; but if we fail to understand its aesthetic validity, we will fail to grasp the text fully.

These issues, of what validity is claimed for aesthetic qualities and how it sustains a concern with the Truth, are the matter of this paper.

A most important consideration of these issues is found not in Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* but in the works of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* employs literary devices and its construction rests on assumptions about the nature of literary and aesthetic validity, but the arguments for such validity are not made in that text. Their most detailed exposition in the tradition of Aristotelian philosophy is to be found in Ibn Sīnā's logical works and in his *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*.<sup>3</sup> Given that Ibn Ṭufayl pays homage to Ibn Sīnā—among others—and uses Ibn Sīnā's work to make his own arguments, including not only features of Ibn Sīnā's theory of psychology or the soul,<sup>4</sup> but also an Aristotelian conception of the

<sup>3</sup>Ismail M. Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974).

<sup>4</sup>The account of the soul involved in the passage from Ibn Sīnā that Ibn Ṭufayl quotes approvingly is related to other parts of Ibn Sīnā's conception of the soul. There, for example in *Kitāb al-naǧāt*, the soul is related to the imagination whose functions include the construction of poetry and the ability to accommodate those parts of a prophetic vision which reason is unable to encompass. See Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*:

nature of logic, including poetics,<sup>5</sup> and given also Ibn Sīnā's development of logic, we may expect that in order to understand more fully the nature of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, the demands it makes of us, its role in communicating a vision to other subjects, and its ability to give us access to Truth, we need to understand, first, what sort of validity can be claimed by the text for its aesthetic character, and second, that such an issue is best dealt with by looking carefully to Ibn Sīnā's account of this issue. Thus, although Ibn Ṭufayl may not have identified the aesthetic nature of the text as we do in late twentieth-century philosophy, nevertheless, his work raises these issues, and if we are to value his text as an intervention in philosophy rather than merely as a historical example of myth-making, we must show how it serves to resolve issues that engage us now. The author is conversant with philosophical styles yet chooses the style of a tale which is also an intervention in the task of philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, we would do it less than justice were we to ignore the philosophical issues it raises.

In any case, if we see the text as an engagement with philosophy, then we are required to make explicit a number of themes which are only implicit. So far as the text employs literary devices, for example, even though he does not consider their validity in the text, Ibn Ṭufayl must use them on the basis of some assumption about their power and validity, for otherwise it would be a merely superficial device to describe *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* as a "philosophical tale." And given our concern with issues in philosophical aesthetics, where Ibn Ṭufayl does not make explicit his theory, we must extract it from where we can. As he has identified his own philosophical debts to Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), and Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139), I would suggest that in this case we are justified in looking to these authors for clues to Ibn Ṭufayl's usage.

We cannot expect to consider all these connections in the space of this paper; but in significant respects al-Ghazālī makes claims about aesthetic validity that coincide with those made by Ibn Sīnā,<sup>7</sup> while al-Fārābī's consideration of Aristotelian theory is developed, often as a result of disagree-

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*an English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter 6* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), Chapter 6, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup>The Aristotelian understanding of logic, which was generally accepted by the *philosophers*, thought of poetics as a part of logic.

<sup>6</sup>It may turn out that the philosophical style of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is a mere anachronism because the text cannot escape its historical situation; but if that is the case, the loss is ours because we have become so distant from the concerns that motivated Ibn Ṭufayl.

<sup>7</sup>See Gregor Schoeler, "Der poetische Syllogismus. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der 'logischen' Poetik der Araber," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 133 (1983), pp. 43–92.

ment, by Ibn Sīnā in his own work on logic and in the *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*. Both these factors make Ibn Sīnā's work an important link to the others' theories. Moreover, his main text on the *Poetics* is more accessible than the texts by al-Fārābī and al-Ghazālī, being self-sufficient in a way that the other two are not. For Ibn Sīnā's theory is presented mostly in one place and with more detail and more argument than is the case with the others, whose relevant remarks are scattered over a number of texts. Consequently, we would do well to take Ibn Sīnā's theory as the central influence on Ibn Ṭufayl, and may see what we can make of issues in philosophical aesthetics by examining the theory set out by Ibn Sīnā and implicit in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.

Our interest in issues of philosophical aesthetics raises another problem with regard to Ibn Sīnā. It is arguable that the philosopher does not seem to deal with *these* aesthetic issues. Thus, for example, it may seem that Ibn Sīnā's *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle* will concern poetics rather than literary value, where the first governs poetry only and may have nothing to say of the second. It may seem, then, that by considering the *Commentary*, we are ascribing to literary value conclusions applicable only to poetry. Such an objection is very short-sighted. It has been noted for some time that Aristotle's *Poetics* has a great deal to say of fiction generally, and does not deal with poetry alone.<sup>8</sup> After all, as Ibn Sīnā makes clear in his *Commentary*, validity concerns the status of a figurative use of language, and this use is not restricted to poetry. Moreover, in relying on poetic syllogisms, which provide the logical status and validity of figurative language, we consider linguistic devices for the feelings they generate, and are not concerned with their truth or falsity. A work of fiction, it seems, is no less capable of gaining this validity than is a statement of fact, though the use of figurative devices in fiction has a particular purpose that is inappropriate to statements of fact. Given that Ibn Sīnā's conclusions about poetic validity are in fact applicable also to works of fiction, such as *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, by clarifying those conclusions we also further our understanding of that text. This should not be surprising: after all, our text also uses images, allegories, symbols, and other poetic devices, and is successful because of that use.

Thus, to make good our claim that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* cannot be understood fully if we do not consider its aesthetic character, and to show what power the text claims because of its aesthetic nature, we shall consider Ibn Sīnā's justification of aesthetic validity.

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<sup>8</sup>The most recent books on Aristotle's *Poetics* continue to construe it in this way. See for example, Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Kathy Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

*Ibn Sīnā on Poetic Validity*

Ibn Sīnā seeks to justify the validity of literary and poetic discourse by arguing that it involves a procedure comparable to objective demonstrative syllogisms. In literary and poetic discourse, figurative devices generate meaning through a process of rational comparison of constitutive elements that is similar to the process of arriving at the conclusions of a valid demonstrative syllogism from its premises. In effect, the aesthetic use of language depends on a poetic syllogism that is similar to, say, demonstrative syllogisms; and so, to justify the validity of literary meanings, we may explain a poetic syllogism by examining the validity of demonstrative syllogisms, for the structure and nature of the latter will tell us what we must look for in order to explain and justify the former.<sup>9</sup>

Ibn Sīnā exhibits the nature of syllogisms in diverse texts. It is outside the scope of this paper to consider all the details of his arguments and explication, and it is more sensible to examine such details of the nature of demonstrative and poetic syllogism as will both ground the theory and show where it needs development. Ibn Sīnā initially identifies the syllogism as "a discourse composed of statements. If the propositions which the syllogism involves are admitted, this by itself necessarily leads to another statement."<sup>10</sup> But then he clarifies his interest in the *relation* between propositions by saying that "it is not a condition of [this kind of proof] to have admitted propositions in order that it be a syllogism. Rather, its condition is such that, if its propositions are admitted, then another statement necessarily follows from them. This is the condition for its being

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<sup>9</sup>This construal of the issue seems already to beg an important question. Ibn Sīnā does not explicitly argue that poetic devices are poetic syllogisms, though he proposes a general relation of universal characteristics of language to the rules of logic. But the implication is there, for he says both that *all* constructed poetry must use the poetic devices set out in the *Commentary*, and that all poetic validity is based on logic. However, it may seem that in now attending to poetic syllogisms we are merely assuming that by dealing with the latter we will have said all that needs to be said of linguistic poetic devices. But in this context, in order to make our analysis of poetic syllogisms useful to Ibn Sīnā's conception of poetics and poetic forms, we need only show that the poetic syllogistic can sustain the characteristics yielded by poetic forms. By clarifying how the poetic syllogistic sustains poetic devices we can show how the latter, having a particular linguistic character, are capable of being logically valid, by arguing, among other things, that syllogisms generally have a certain character, and must satisfy given requirements—the proof procedures cannot be infinite, for example, and the procedures must be complete in a sense to be explained; that poetic syllogisms have this character; and that the cumulative and poetic senses generated by poetic devices can satisfy this requirement of poetic syllogisms.

<sup>10</sup>Ibn Sīnā, *Remarks and Admonishments, Part One: Logic*, translated with an Introduction and notes by Shams Constantine Inati (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), p. 130.

a syllogism.”<sup>11</sup> The necessity with which one statement follows from another, of course, parallels Aristotle’s definition of syllogisms as a “discourse in which, certain things being posited, something other than what is posited follows of necessity from their being so.”<sup>12</sup> Consonantly, Ibn Sīnā’s comparison of figurative language with logical necessity stresses the rational and meaning-dependent nature of conviction in both cases.<sup>13</sup> The deployment of poetic syllogisms makes poetic works meaningful and successful. These poetic syllogisms are “composed of imagined propositions, in as much as their imagined aspect is considered, be they true or false. In short, they are composed of premises [having] a certain disposition and composition, which the soul receives by virtue of their resemblance or [their] truth.”<sup>14</sup> Although both kinds of syllogism instantiate a similar “comparison between premises,” the poetic case uses “premises inspired by emotion.” And this reference to the emotions is extended by saying that we give compliance or imaginative assent to a poetic syllogism due to the pleasure and wonder that we feel in response to understanding and thereby appreciating the harmony of its elements. Our concern is with the meanings given to poetic premises when their synthesis, structured by poetic forms, gives rise to pleasure and wonder in a process comparable to the conviction we gain in understanding and accepting the demonstrative syllogism.

When Ibn Sīnā explains aesthetic validity by reference to the poetic syllogism, he has this to say of the logical form:

Although it does not make any assertions which claim truth, [the poetic syllogism] instead seeks to evoke a representation, [and] seems nevertheless to make an assertion claiming truth. So far as it is poetry, it is not said to be false, when the premises are used as if they were accepted (*musallama*). For example, when one says “N.N. is a moon” because he is fair of face, then one concludes as follows: N.N. is fair of face. Everyone who is fair of face is a moon. Therefore N.N. is a moon. There also applies to this assertion (*taṣdīq*) that if one accepts what is in it, then an assertion follows from it. But the poet does not at all want this conclusion to be believed, even if he *seems* to, so far as he is a poet; rather, his aim is to suggest through his conclusion that the soul [of the audience] finds the object of praise to be fair. Likewise, when [the poet] states: “A rose in the anus of

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, Chapter 1, 24b16. I have used an unpublished translation by Professor Robert Price.

<sup>13</sup> Schoeler, “Der poetische Syllogismus,” *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> *Remarks and Admonishments*, p. 131.

a mule, in the middle of which dung is visible," it is as if he has said: everything which is in this way the dung of a mule (i.e. red outside, yellow inside) is filthy and dirty. Even though it is a syllogism—i.e. one accepts the premises and proves from that the conclusion, the poet in no way intends to state that his opinion [statement] is correct, rather he wants the soul to feel disgust for that which the statement is about.<sup>15</sup>

This description of the poetic syllogism does not coincide in every respect with what he says of it elsewhere. Nor does it agree wholly with the conclusions Ibn Sīnā relies on in his first chapter of the *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*. We cannot expect to resolve all such differences, and in any case, the central claims are similar in all the texts. As the most useful explanation is given in the longer passage just cited, it is as well to use that one. Ibn Sīnā is claiming that whether their structure is explicitly expressed or merely implicit, poetic and literary utterances have a logical form which follows the pattern of demonstrative reasoning. Any combination of terms in a poetic utterance, if it is meaningful, can be analysed and its logical structure displayed. Indeed, it is only because it has this logical structure, among other features, that the poetic utterance is meaningful.<sup>16</sup> Ibn Sīnā's example of an explicit syllogism is "N.N. is a moon;" the structure of this metaphor is easily proposed: it is a conclusion. The minor premise, that "N.N. is fair of face," and the major premise that "Everyone fair of face is a moon," lead to the conclusion that "N.N. is a moon." Other metaphors and literary devices will have a similar structure, being capable of analysis into parallel premises. Some may be more complicated, and figurative language generally may involve other kinds of poetic forms in addition, while other uses of language may contain more than one poetic syllogism.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup>This passage is quoted in Schoeler, "Der poetische Syllogismus," pp. 48–49.

<sup>16</sup>In the passage cited Ibn Sīnā seems content to display examples of logical structure in the "Barbara" mood. It is possible also to use a Celarent mood, and in the *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle* he uses both as the fundamental mechanism to identify five poetic forms that structure poetic meanings. However, this talk of Barbara and Celarent moods should not disguise the distinctive character of poetic syllogisms.

<sup>17</sup>But the ordinary syllogisms in their Barbara and Celarent moods remain important. In any case, the major premise appears to have the form of a statement of identity, though in fact it only affirms a similarity (see Schoeler, "Der poetische Syllogismus," pp. 48–49). Clearly, all those fair of face are *not* moons, even if it is possible, in a given cultural context, to see a resemblance. One problem with this description is that as the comparison contained in the metaphor—the conclusion—is not strikingly different from the similarity proposed in the major premise, we do not seem to have advanced very far in understanding and justifying the use of metaphors by analysing them to display their logical structure. It seems that both the premises and the conclusion are infected by the same lacunae. The suggestion was that "N.N.

To develop this account further, Ibn Sīnā writes that we not only conceive of and assent to propositions,<sup>18</sup> but we also accept the conclusions of proofs using the propositions as premises.<sup>19</sup> Cognitive conviction turns on, first, grasping meanings and so identifying the terms in the premise of an argument; second, knowing that their use in premises is appropriate to the object, so that, third, given the validity of the proof, fourth, the assertion they go to form is true. Similarly, where metaphorical or figurative language leads us to perceive resemblances and identities of meanings, the syllogistic form is at work. We understand the meaning of "the evening of life" because we can grasp the juxtaposition of the span of day with the span of life. But, in the aesthetic use of language, we understand meanings in order to generate assent through experiences of pleasure rather than by regarding the truth or falsity of the relations apparently asserted in the terms of the poetic syllogism. Thus our metaphor works because of its syllogistic structure, yet not because life really is identical with a day, but because the associations suggested by the comparison evoke a particular response in us.

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is a moon" should be understood as affirming a similarity where such an affirmation could be analysed into the logical structure of the poetic syllogism. That is, "N.N. is a moon" or "the horses of youth" seem at first to be incomprehensible. They proclaim a resemblance as if it were an identity, and we do not know how to interpret them meaningfully. To solve this difficulty, Ibn Sīnā proposes that we consider that such metaphors are meaningful as the conclusions of poetic syllogisms, and suggests that therefore we seek to understand them by analysing them into the premises from which, as syllogistic conclusions, they were constructed. This will show us something of their meanings and why they are valid. But when we carry out this analysis, it turns out that the premises themselves contain the kind of comparison they were supposed to resolve. The major premise of "N.N. is a moon" makes a comparison which is not true and yet seems to assert an identity when, at best, it only asserts or affirms a similarity. In other words, the poetic syllogism contains a premise which latter also stands in need of analysis into logical structure to explain its affirmation of a similarity. As the premise itself stands in need of explanation, and as Ibn Sīnā has proposed that such explanation is provided by treating these statements as syllogistic conclusions, it seems that we must analyse the premise into a subset of further premises—and this process may occur without end so long as the premises only affirm similarities. However, in *Remarks and Admonishments*, in talking of the Sixth Method and, later, of the Ninth, Ibn Sīnā makes clear that our assent to poetic premises is qualitatively distinct from our dealing with syllogistic conclusions. In part their difference is made clear by the distinctive logical role each plays; but also the suggestion is that our assent to premises is based on a feeling of "rightness," or "aptness," that gives rise to wonder when we assent to the premise. This assent to the premise is also reason for supposing that the process of analysis need not proceed indefinitely.

<sup>18</sup>Cf., for example, *Remarks and Admonishments*, pp. 48–58.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130. In addition to the syllogism, Ibn Sīnā also discusses two other kinds of proof—induction and analogy—but both of these are dependent on syllogisms, and the latter are "the underpinning" of all kinds of proof.

This brief review of the comparison between poetic and demonstrative or cognitive syllogisms needs to be deepened by explaining their necessity and validity. Logical necessity is defined by saying that conclusions must follow if the premises are accepted and are related by semantical and syntactical relations to the conclusion. "[I]f its propositions (premises) are admitted, then another statement necessarily follows from them."<sup>20</sup> The logical necessity operating here was taken by Aristotle to be primitive and obvious, and so to need no explanation or defense beyond exhibiting its exercise in particular cases. The thought behind this maneuver, roughly speaking, is this: We ask for explanations in order to clarify meanings. For example, we may clarify "Zayd is mortal" by explaining that it is the conclusion of two premises that "Zayd is a man" and "All men are mortal." But these premises may be thought to stand in need of further clarification to show what it is for a statement to serve as the premise of a syllogism or to explain what it means to say that "Zayd is a man." The latter may be explained by defining "man" by reference to terms that are better known, or more easily understood, or more precise. But when we define "man" as "a featherless biped," of course it seems possible to ask for the definition to be explained further. So, "biped" may be explained in terms of "any animate creature that usually walks on two legs," and so on. Aristotle maintains that such clarification cannot proceed infinitely. At some point, our explanations must come to an end, usually in the basic categories and terms that we must accept if we are even to ask for clarification. As Ibn Sīnā argues: "If every conception requires a prior conception, then such a state of affairs would lead either to regression or circularity."<sup>21</sup> These basic terms and concepts cannot be explained further because all explanation and thought proceeds by accepting their validity. We might label these as first principles: they must be known directly, without being explained in terms of more basic definitions, for if they could be so defined, they would not be first principles.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131. Demonstrative syllogisms are distinguished not by the set of relations they require between premises but by their premises. All premises are such that if certain things are posited or accepted for various reasons, then something other than what is posited, which bears certain syntactical and semantical relations to what is posited or accepted, must follow. The *relation between premises* is what a syllogistic determines, and that remains constant whether we are concerned with rhetoric, poetics, or demonstration. However, the basis for accepting or positing premises will differ, depending on whether we are dealing with poetic premises, rhetorical ones, or ones in demonstrations. These differences in premises go to distinguish one kind of syllogism from another.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Metaphysics* of the *Kitāb al-shifā*, Book 1, Chapter 5, p. 30, quoted in Michael M. Marmura, "Avicenna on Primary Concepts in the *Metaphysics* of his *al-Shifā*," in *Logos islamikos: Studia islamica in honorem Georgii Michales Wickens*, edited by Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Agills (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), pp. 219–39.



The first principles, for Aristotle, include both the concepts that make up the categories and the logical rules that structure all thought.<sup>22</sup> Ibn Sīnā identifies the basic concepts in the following way: "The ideas of 'the existent,' 'the thing,' and 'the necessary,' are impressed in the soul in a primary way, this impression not requiring better known things to bring it about." Similarly, "in the category of judgment[s]... there are primary principles, in themselves found to be true, causing [in turn] assent to the truth of other [propositions]. If these primary propositions do not come to mind or if the expression designating them is not understood, then it would be impossible to know whatever is known through them." Among judgments, these "primary intelligibles" include obvious and primitive logical Truths.<sup>23</sup> The suggestion is that these logical Truths, being the basis for all other explanations and reasoning, cannot be proved by any further set of propositions, but must be known directly, for themselves, and so must be obvious and primitive. On the basis of these logical Truths, demonstrative syllogisms, relying on the use of primary concepts and definitions to grasp objects and to assert relations in premises, are the most certain, while the other kinds of syllogism are varying degrees away from demonstration in certainty.<sup>24</sup>

However, a defense by reference to primitiveness and obviousness, even if it works for demonstration, need not work for poetic syllogisms because the latter are based only on a similarity with the former. What is obvious in the case of logical necessity may need to be explained and justified when used in poetic syllogisms. Of course, conversely, a defense of the former may give us clues of how to defend the latter.<sup>25</sup> Ibn Sīnā defends the primitive and obvious nature of logical validity by displaying the syllogistic forms in examples, where their mechanism is clear, and then arguing that the exhibited forms are adequate for formalizing *all* deductive arguments, whether formal or informal. Given their primitive and obvious character, this is the only way to proceed, for we cannot expect to explain them by "impart[ing] knowledge not [already] present in the natural intelligence, but [can] merely draw attention to the comprehension of what [any] speaker intends and upholds."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle evokes the need to avoid *apaideusia*—and its resulting isolation from the rational community—by accepting the law of non-contradiction if there is to be meaningful discourse between rational and cognizant beings. An account of the issues involving philosophical logic in Aristotle's *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* is provided by Jonathan Lear in *Aristotle and Logical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). I am indebted to this book for clarifying the role of a number of arguments that Ibn Sīnā, in following Aristotle, also adopts.

<sup>23</sup>Marmura, "Avicenna on Prior Concepts," p. 219.

<sup>24</sup>*Remarks and Admonishments*, pp. 148–50.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Marmura, "Avicenna on Prior Concepts," p. 222.

Further, he maintains that of the syllogistic forms, "the first division, called 'the first figure,' had been found perfect with much goodness—in as much as its syllogistic character, i.e. the necessity of yielding to a conclusion, is evident in itself and not in need of a proof." Naturally, "the converse of this division has been found remote from our nature."<sup>27</sup> Because this first figure is basic, we cannot expect to prove it—it consists of four perfect and self-evident syllogistic conclusions:<sup>28</sup> 1) All As are Cs;<sup>29</sup> 2) No A are C;<sup>30</sup> 3) Some A are C;<sup>31</sup> 4) Some C are not A.<sup>32</sup> Next, we may propose that all non-formal and imperfect deductions—including the second and third figures Ibn Sīnā goes on to set out; therefore, *any* deduction—can be converted into perfect and obvious deductions in one or more of these four syllogistic forms. For example, the moods of the second figure are explained by comparison with the first figure. Thus, the "first mood of the second figure is something like the phrase: 'Every B is a C, Nothing of A is B, therefore Nothing of C is A.'" To prove the validity of this argument, Ibn Sīnā converts it into a mood of the first figure. Accordingly, "we convert the major, making it 'Nothing of B is A,' and then add to it the minor premise, thus forming the second mood of the first figure..."<sup>33</sup>

The procedure Ibn Sīnā follows in these passages, then, shows that the various formal arguments we use involve at their basis, as the test of their coherence and validity, the syllogistic forms of the first figure and its four moods. Similarly, non-formal deductions of the kind present in our ordinary reasoning bear a logical structure that may not be obvious, but if they are to count as reasoning, their procedures must be capable of being formalized, and so ultimately must rest on the obvious and primitive first figure. Moreover, if all non-formal and imperfect deductions depend on the perfect and self-evident first figure, then we can gain any conclusion only by using premises that link terms in the conclusion through a middle term in at least one of the four forms. That is, at least one of the four forms will apply in *all* deductions, and will validate the deduction in which it occurs. So, to prove the validity of any non-formal deduction, it is necessary only to clarify which of the four syllogistic conclusions or forms of the first figure lies at its basis, for its four syllogistic forms are obviously valid and are primitive. To justify the non-formal syllogism, we need only to convert it or express it so that we exhibit the presence of the formal and obvious

<sup>27</sup> *Remarks and Admonishments*, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135–37.

<sup>29</sup> This is the Barbara mood: All A are B; All B are C, therefore All A are C.

<sup>30</sup> This is the Celarent mood: All A are B, No B is C; therefore No A are C.

<sup>31</sup> This is the Darii mood: Some A are B, All B are C, therefore Some A are C.

<sup>32</sup> This is the Ferio mood: Some A are B, No B are C, therefore Some A are not C.

<sup>33</sup> *Remarks and Admonishments*, p. 134.

sylogistic at its basis. Consequently, the four syllogistic forms provide a complete and consistent set of rules for *any* deduction and so serve as criteria for validity.

This claim Ibn Sīnā explicates in his writings on logic,<sup>34</sup> and we may hold that his examination of poetic or figurative language and devices is intended to argue analogously to conclusions about *their* nature, formation, and validity. For Ibn Sīnā, “the elements which make an utterance imaginative” and therefore poetic include sound and sense, and involve a relation between parts that “is either proportional or contrastive, and both proportion and contrast are either complete or incomplete. All this is either according to wording or meaning. . . .” Further, all these constructions are constituted by using the five poetic forms identified by Ibn Sīnā.<sup>35</sup> And we may suggest that the poetic forms are comparable to syllogistic forms in that a figurative meaning is like a conclusion gained by comparing elements in a syllogism. Although in the figurative device we gain a conclusion by comparing meaningful elements to gain a pleasurable harmony, nevertheless, poetic forms must be similar to demonstration in some significant way if we are to claim that they are valid as syllogisms. Given the examples of imperfect and non-formal deductions, we may expect that such similarity will consist in being reducible to the first figure, and further, in depending on premises accepted in ways parallel to demonstration, dialectic, or rhetoric. That is, Ibn Sīnā’s discussion of poetic forms is not just a summary listing of figures of speech and thought, but serves the more serious aim of defending the necessity of poetic syllogisms by showing that the various poetic devices we use ultimately depend for their success on using something like the four perfect, obvious, and primitive syllogistic forms. Similarly, examples of informal reasoning could be shown to depend on obvious syllogistic forms. Thus, in keeping with this analogy, Ibn Sīnā defends his claims for poetic syllogisms by saying that the only way to gain imaginative poetic meanings is by using terms in a synthesis that follows one of the five poetic or figurative forms he has displayed. Such a procedure obviously has parallels with the exhibition of the valid forms of demonstrative syllogisms. In both we try to show that the basic syllogistic is inescapable.

Ibn Sīnā says that the five forms of poetic construction or syllogism generate new and figurative meanings through contrast and proportion. One form of construction according to contrast, for example, involves words that do not

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<sup>34</sup>See *Remarks and Admonishments* for a succinct statement of a number of these arguments. Other of Ibn Sīnā’s logical works bear out these claims: see, for example, Nabil Shehaby, *The Propositional Logic of Avicenna* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1982). For other approaches to these issues, see the studies of Lear and Schoeler, cited above.

<sup>35</sup>*Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*, p. 115.

merely differ from one another in terms of sound but also in terms of meaning, i.e. the meaning that it commonly has. The form of this type exists in two or more words of which one means something and the other means its opposite, what is supposed to be its opposite or contrary, or what is proportional to, related to, and connected with its opposite, e.g. *sawād* (blackness) which also means "arable land," *bayād* (whiteness and wasteland), *rahma* (mercy), *jahannam* (Hell), and all such words.<sup>36</sup>

Ibn Sīnā's claim is that all figurative language shares in the structure and construction set out under the rubric of meanings gained by poetic forms. This structure may not always be obvious, any more than the syllogistic forms are obviously present in informal deductions, and so may need to be made clear; but they can be supposed present. Further, as the logical necessity of a syllogistic conclusion is justified by displaying the obviously valid forms at its basis, we justify the necessity of poetic conclusions by exhibiting the presence of poetic syllogistic forms.

It may seem that beyond the task of showing the presence of these poetic forms and their parallels with the demonstrative syllogism, we will also need to propose how their deployment shares in the obvious and evident forms of the first figure. Ultimately, it can be argued, whatever other parallels we may find between the five forms of the poetic syllogistic and the demonstrative syllogistic, only when we show that the poetic forms are based upon the obvious and primitive syllogistic forms do we also justify their validity. However, this claim misconstrues the role of the poetic syllogistic and its relation to demonstration. Ibn Sīnā distinguishes between different kinds of syllogism by pointing to the variety of premises, with their distinctive logical and epistemological statuses, that are brought within the same logical structure of syllogistic proof. Demonstrative proofs have premises that must be accepted; dialectical syllogisms are composed of widely known propositions; rhetorical syllogisms of presumed propositions; and so on.<sup>37</sup> But such differences in premises fail to make them any less syllogisms, for they all share in the same proof procedure identified in the three different syllogistic figures, all of which, if valid, must ultimately be reducible to the first figure. To be valid as a syllogistic, then, the poetic forms must parallel the rules and proof procedures that make a syllogism a syllogism. But having this formal structure of proof does not make a poetic syllogism into a demonstrative one, and we do not need a further argument—beyond pointing out that the poetic syllogistic can satisfy the requirements of the syllogistic proof procedure—to show that the poetic syllogistic is a syllogis-

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> *Remarks and Admonishments*, p. 148.

tic. All kinds of syllogisms—including the dialectical, the rhetorical, and the poetic—fail to be demonstrative for reasons of their premises, but they are all syllogisms because they share in the obvious and primitive syllogistic in some way. To show how poetic syllogisms can possess validity, we do not need to argue that they are demonstrative in some measure, but must see whether and how poetic forms satisfy the requirements of the syllogistic proof procedures and thereby parallel the first figure syllogistic. And to show this parallel, we may consider how poetic forms are able to cope with objections that threaten the use and validity of syllogisms generally.

First, we may question the claim that the success of any poetic utterance depends on those five basic ways of constructing poetic meanings (the poetic syllogism), by rejecting the assumption that every poetic meaning can be expressed in those five forms: that is, by raising the issue of the *completeness* of the poetic syllogistic. The issue may be explained by reference to a similar problem that occurs elsewhere. In the case of logical necessity, the completeness of a proof procedure is assessed by seeing how completely it can grasp and exhibit all the logical consequences of a set of premises. If the use of the four syllogistic forms yields a procedure for proof, allowing us to move legitimately from a set of premises through inferences to a conclusion, then that proof procedure would be thought reliable if it accounted for *all* the possibilities contained in the premises and showed that the conclusion arose from those premises. For this, the proof procedure must be finite, and must be capable of incorporating all the logically possible variables resulting from the premises. But if the *proof procedure*, first, were itself infinite or, second, inadequate to all the possibilities contained in the premises, then the procedure would be impossible to complete or its completion would be inadequate to the premises.

To take the second possibility, that of the procedure being inadequate to the premises, a procedure that could not account for all the possibilities in a set of premises would be unreliable just because we could never use it with the certainty that we had completely grasped all the implications of the premises. Some implications that we might intuitively have expected to follow from the premises would not be incorporated in the proof procedure, and if we were to accept the implications it would have to be because we did not rely on the procedure. This sort of inadequacy will be considered again below, and we need not consider it further here. The first possibility raises other issues: conclusions resulting from the use of a procedure that was infinitely long could always be doubted because it could never be known that any part of the procedure was being followed correctly. This is because the procedure itself could not be completed, and its full details would remain unknown; so any use of it would be based on faith that the as-yet-untested parts of the procedure did not contain any contradictions or that it did not

thwart itself. If it is infinite, it is incomplete, and so ultimately cannot be known to be valid. Therefore, any proofs based on that procedure would also remain questionable and unreliable.

A defense of the infinitely long proof procedure may be suggested as follows. It is true that the as-yet-untested parts of a proof procedure may be contradictory, but that need not lead us to doubt all the procedure, including those parts we may have used without problems. It is always possible that the parts we have used will prove to be mistaken because some other part of the procedure could later prove to be contradictory or self-defeating. But such incoherence will only consist of particular errors, which must be identified as the problems arise. And even if such errors were identified, their existence does not show us that they must be discarded. Their existence does not show us that the untested parts of the procedure are generally unsatisfactory. Hence, we have no warrant for the claim that generally the proof procedure must be considered unreliable, even in the parts we have used without problems, until the reliability of the whole has been established. That is, if there is unreliability, that will have to be shown as and when it occurs. We cannot infer from the fact that it is possible for us to make mistakes to the conclusion that some part of every step, including the ones we have already taken, must be mistaken. It is equally possible that some part of the procedure is correct; we do not have to show how that part fits with the whole in order to rely on that part.

This defense misconstrues the nature of the problems of completeness and the role of a proof procedure in the particular arguments we provide. The procedure sets out the rules for gaining particular proofs. If the procedure is itself mistaken, then the conclusions arising from the use of that procedure will be unreliable just because they depend on the mistaken proof procedure. If the conclusions are thought right, it can only be for reasons other than their following a mistaken procedure; for a mistaken procedure can yield Truths only by accident, not by design. If a procedure remains infinite, then it cannot be completed, and so cannot be known to be satisfactory. Consequently, any proof based on that procedure will be infected by a doubt that afflicts the procedure: we cannot know that the proof is reliable because we can never know that its procedure is acceptable. If the procedure were not known in its entirety, we could not know that it was satisfactory, and so we could not know that its deployment in particular arguments was successful. Thus, its success depends on completeness, for only when it is complete is it known in its entirety.

Even if the proof procedure is finite, there are yet other ways in which the completeness of a proof procedure is threatened. Aristotle dealt with the threat to the completeness of his proof procedure by first displaying the four syllogistic forms and then arguing that every deduction must link its

terms in one of these ways.<sup>38</sup> We have seen that Ibn Sīnā makes a similar claim for the first figure; but further, to defend this claim, we can develop two arguments.<sup>39</sup> First, we can consider a complex set of premises. Its complexity raises the possibility that we cannot grasp all the logical consequences of all the possible premises, and so our procedure may prove inadequate to understanding or ordering any argument based on those premises. Second, there may be an infinite number of such premises, so that our proof using the suggested procedure may never come to an end. In either case, because we have no guarantee that the procedure can cope with all the possibilities contained in the premises, we cannot be certain about any conclusions we arrive at using that proof procedure.

Against these possibilities, for Ibn Sīnā we can propose that a deduction with a large number of premises can be converted into a series of inferences having only two steps in one of the syllogistic forms. Further, as this leaves open the possibility that there may be no end to the number of inferences in this "two-step" series, Ibn Sīnā argues that the process of two-step inferences ends when all the premises of a syllogism are shown to be principles or axioms which we cannot be required or expected to prove—that the proofs must have an end when we reach those axioms and principles, and so cannot be infinitely long. This argument is expressed in the claims that, first, the premises of a two-step inference cannot both involve only particulars; second, that it is possible to demonstrate that the universal premises are ultimately necessary ones; and third, that the minor premise must ultimately rest on or be an axiom.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the basis of a proof in axioms or principles, the ability to dissolve a set of complex premises into a set made up of a series of simple premises, and the use of syllogistic forms, are together taken to show that logical necessity is adequate to the full range of possible knowledge and demonstrative or cognitive deductions. The complexity of a set of premises is not a barrier to the deduction because a complex set is held to be qualitatively the same as a series of simple inferences, so that nothing of the sense of the complex set is lost when it is analysed and re-expressed as a series of simple inferences.

Such an argument for the completeness of a syllogistic may provide clues for defending the validity of poetic syllogisms. However, it is not clear that the analogies with poetic syllogisms are strong enough to warrant poetic

<sup>38</sup> Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*; Lear, *Aristotle and Logical Theory*, *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> These arguments have their counterparts in Aristotle's work. Cf. Lear, *Aristotle and Logical Theory*, *passim*.

<sup>40</sup> *Remarks and Admonishments*, pp. 135–37. To demonstrate that the universal premises are ultimately necessary ones and must depend on axioms, we can turn to the *Metaphysics*, where, as we have seen, Ibn Sīnā argued that all thought must depend on the categories and the principles of logic. Any argument must rest on axioms and principles because all thought must do so.

validity. There do not seem to be clear principles operating in poetics, and the ability to simplify complex inferences into a series of simple ones seems inappropriate in poetry.<sup>41</sup> Because poetic sense is cumulative and synthetic rather than analytic, we cannot assume that everything that follows from a complex combination of terms will also follow from a series of simpler constructions. Nuances and meanings are generated by complex constructions and frequently are lost upon translation into simpler constructions.

In spite of such differences, we can defend Ibn Sīnā's poetic syllogistic against the threat of incompleteness. The poetic syllogistic does not claim completeness in the same way, but poetry does provide grounds for satisfactory agreement. Instead of guaranteeing that proofs are finite, simply by pointing to basic principles or by identifying axioms in poetic syllogisms, Ibn Sīnā proposes that the construction of meanings in figurative language involves a relation between terms that, when it is harmonious, occasions pleasure when we grasp it. Thus, in the poetic syllogism, in spite of the absence of principles and axioms, the pleasure occasioned by harmony serves to guard against incompleteness by showing that its forms and terms must be finite. Just as logical necessity would be inadequate if we could never be sure that the proofs were finite and capable of being completed, similarly, if a figurative use of language involved so complex a set of terms that its mix were infinite, then we could have no certainty that the meaning that resulted from using the poetic syllogistic forms was adequate to all the possibilities in that mix of terms, and a grasp of meanings that depended on using those forms could never be known to be successful. But, just as, among other things, we have pointed to the basis of logical proofs in axioms to show that the proofs must be finite, similarly, we may point to the occurrence of pleasure to argue that there is a limit to the terms and premises involved in a poetic syllogism, for the terms are related in a harmony that occasions pleasure and wonder. As pleasure depends on the grasp of meanings, and assuming that we cannot hold an infinite number of terms in balance,<sup>42</sup> the occurrence of pleasure serves to show that the mix of terms is not infinite and that the threat of incompleteness is dissolved. Here, a harmony between infinite numbers of elements is an implausible event: a harmony, or balance, presupposes some sense of a whole, so that the elements can be held in relation within the whole and found to have a harmony. The existence of an infinite number of elements would at best

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<sup>41</sup>For problems with reducing a set of complex premises into a series of simple one, see T. Smiley, "What is a Syllogism?," *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 22 (1972), pp. 27–41.

<sup>42</sup>It is appropriate to say that Aristotle defends the same claim indirectly in his *Metaphysics* by arguing that nature is such that it could never be open to infinite predication. Therefore, it is unnecessary to defend syllogisms against the possibility of infinite predication because the possibility could not arise in our dealings with nature.



render partial or temporary any claim to have gained a balance between elements.

In this context, wonder in assenting to premises also puts a limit to the openness of poetic syllogisms.<sup>43</sup> For poetic syllogisms cannot be proven indefinitely, as if, whenever we came to some premise, it could be supposed that the premise must be capable of being clarified further. If such were the case, then again, any syllogism would be unsure of completeness because it would extend infinitely in the direction of its increasingly detailed premises. The occurrence of wonder, as a result of assent to premises, so to speak puts a stop to that infinite regress because wonder signals our acceptance of the premises for themselves. There is no need then to look for further support for those premises from more detailed premises. Further, Ibn Sīnā's association of pleasure and harmony between poetic elements is explained by pointing to the origins of pleasure in the soul.<sup>44</sup> Such an association has a long history, extending from Classical to modern times. Ibn Sīnā is neither the first nor the last to make it, and the best defense of the claim that harmony is pleasurable is that it allows us to juxtapose and organize our numerous insights about aesthetic activity and response into a comprehensive theory. Thus, we could use the coherence and comprehensiveness of the resulting theory to justify associating harmony with pleasure, rather than the link being first given a foundation for the theory to work. This will lead us to find the absence of pleasure in harmony counter-intuitive and in need of explanation by reference to obstacles in the way of appreciation, rather than to seek explanations of the presence of pleasure and awe.

Once this is accepted, then the second requirement of completeness in poetic syllogisms may also be explained through its analogy with the demonstrative syllogistic. In the case of logical necessity, it has been argued that every complex set of premises in a deduction can be reduced to a set of simple two-step deductions using one of the four syllogistic conclusions. However, this ability to simplify seems questionable in logic<sup>45</sup> and is surely inappropriate to literary and poetic language. Because literary and poetic sense is cumulative, and poetic nuances are gained, for example, through complexities in construction, so that aesthetic language is synthetic rather than analytic,<sup>46</sup> we cannot assume that everything that follows from or is suggested by a complex set of terms will also follow from

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<sup>43</sup>In *Remarks and Admonishments*, p. 138, in the Sixth Method on the nature of premises, Ibn Sīnā asserts that our assent to poetic premises gives rise to a feeling of wonder.

<sup>44</sup>See above; Ibn Sīnā, *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*, pp. 64, 74.

<sup>45</sup>Smiley, "What is a Syllogism?," *passim*.

<sup>46</sup>The contrast of poetic thought with "analytic" scientific discourse is proposed by Ibn Sīnā in arguing that analytic thought is the clearest and most desirable state of affairs.

or be suggested by a series of simpler constructions. And this again raises the issue of completeness: the development of metaphors may require a complex combination of terms that cannot be reduced to simpler constructions that, without any loss of overall meaning, can then be grasped by using one of the five forms of poetic syllogistic. That is, the syllogistic may be unreliable because the syllogistic forms may be unable to preserve the sense of a set of complex combinations.

The answer to this problem is put forward when Ibn Sīnā identifies the themes guiding the deployment of figurative language. He writes that "every theme [has] its particular measure, and each measure was given a name. . . . One of these kinds of poetry was called *Tragedy*. It has an exquisite and pleasant measure and contains the commemoration of goodness, moral excellence, and the outstanding traits."<sup>47</sup> Other themes include Dithyramb, Comedy, Iambic, Drama, Didactic, *Anthus*, Heroic Epic, Satyric, Poemata, *Amphi genesoes*, and Acoustic. More than rules for constructing figurative language, these embody something about the ways figurative or poetic conclusions are gained. Just as all proofs of logic must be simplified into two-step versions of syllogistic forms, so all figurative language must involve, first, the five forms of poetic syllogistic, which articulate contrastive and proportional relations between terms, and second, the five forms must be deployed in ways that give rise to one of the above themes. So, even if there is no guarantee that the terms in a poetic syllogism are capable of being simplified, they are still amenable to organization by showing which themes are their guiding principles. To say that every theme has its own measure and name is, for Ibn Sīnā, to say that its relation of terms instantiates the use of particular poetic syllogistic forms. So, tragedy uses musical notes for "lamentation and elegy" and involves associated contrasts and proportions that differ from the sorts of proportion and contrast appropriate to comedy.<sup>48</sup> And just as simplification to syllogistic forms guarded against the threat of incompleteness, similarly, the deployment of themes having a basis in the poetic syllogistic forms guards against the threat of incompleteness by determining whether combinations of terms are appropriate or adequate.

This role of themes may be criticized generally and in particular in Ibn Sīnā's use. Generally, it seems to fail to establish that we will always be able to understand figurative language because it does not show that or how themes result from poetic syllogisms and it does not show that no other themes are possible. For if other themes are possible, then the ones picked out will not serve to organize all possible combinations of terms; and

<sup>47</sup> *Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle*, pp. 66–68.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

if they do not rest on the syllogistic form, the latter cannot be known to be the basis for all combinations of terms. That is, the proofs offered in such syllogistic forms and themes fail to be finite and complete because, first, the number of themes cannot be restricted without curtailing the senses we may gain by inventing and using new figures of speech and language—therefore it disallows creativity. Second, the relation of theme to syllogistic form has not been shown to be determinate, and we need a further account of proof here, to know that the given uses of language belong to one theme rather than another.

However, these objections fail against the claims made by Ibn Sīnā. We seek to include poetic syllogisms within the bounds of rational activity; and to the first objection we need only reply that though the themes pursued may change, and new ones be developed, to decide whether putative cases *are* poetic themes we only need to give reasons, defend our claims, and accept or reject their status on reasonable grounds. The characterization of themes *is* open to argument, but this defense of poetic syllogisms by defense of themes need not itself be a matter of poetry. So, of course the development of new themes cannot be excluded, but unless it is argued that new themes are incapable of justification and will depend on something other than the five syllogistic forms, this defense need not refute the completeness of the poetic syllogistic and show that its forms are vacuous. There is neither circularity nor contradiction in arguing that poetic syllogisms must have completeness because they rest on themes that organize the products of the five forms of poetic syllogistic, and then accepting that the themes are open to rational defense and development. We can add to the number of themes, perhaps by identifying a “post-tragic epic,” but this addition must be defended by argument, and it does not detract from the validity of the syllogistic. The themes and forms, once established by the given rules, will exhaust all figurative language, and so a poetic syllogism can claim validity because its order can be defended. Although we can establish new themes, arguing that something formerly found irrelevant can be incorporated into consideration as an organizing principle, still we are not establishing a new status for themes by doing this, and the character of the order gained by syllogistic forms and themes—their logical status—remains unchanged. And the syllogistic can be complete.

We may still question the assumption that new and old themes are dependent on the five syllogistic forms. The relation of theme to form presumably differs from that between syllogistic forms and the terms used in figurative language. Yet it is far from clear in Ibn Sīnā’s writings on the *Poetics* what their relation is taken to be; and if there is a determinate relation between forms and themes, then again the creative development of new themes would seem to be made impossible. If so, then either we have

only a restrictive sense of creativity, or using the themes does not ensure that all possible senses of the relation of terms have been grasped. And if the latter is the case then we have failed to defend the validity of poetic syllogistic.

It is not clear what sort of reply can be made to an objection of this kind, except to repeat and develop what has already been said. There is an important sense in which the themes cannot be restricted without doing damage to one usual notion of creativity, and there is an important sense in which the absence of all restrictions on the development of new themes will rob us of all guarantee that the poetic syllogistic forms are exhaustive of and comprehensive over all poetic and figurative language. As a result of the latter, the syllogistic will be unable to claim validity. But there is a way to have both: to leave open the possibility of discovering new themes and also to claim that the themes we have together with the syllogistic forms we use can bring completeness to the poetic syllogistic. This possibility is realized if we argue that the discovery and justification of new themes is a rational process—that while we may add to the themes we have, we do so for good reasons. Nor does this offend against creativity. If new work is not nonsensical, it must be capable of being understood, and therefore it must satisfy reason and feeling. The suggestion is that poetic forms provide the criteria by which we judge the meaning and rationality of the aesthetic use of language. Satisfying these criteria no more suppresses creativity than a use of logic prevents us from making discoveries or inventing new arguments and reasons. In both cases, rules are imposed as a means of making communication and understanding possible. Without them we would not have creative work, but only nonsense. Of course, this leaves us the task of explaining how a theme is related to and defined in terms of the poetic forms. But this task calls for the account to be developed further, it does not serve as an objection to the analysis we have given, of the nature and status of the aesthetic use of language, by identifying and justifying the nature of poetic syllogisms. What we have done is to show that the poetic syllogism can claim completeness and validity against the objections set out above. That has been our principal intention; what we have seen is that some other issues are raised by that defense of the syllogism, including the task of explaining the relation of theme to form. The need to carry out this task does not constitute an objection; and so it is also a task that may be left for another occasion.

In summary: we began by comparing demonstrative and poetic syllogisms to see whether the first yielded any clues for defending the validity of the second. For Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā, logical necessity was obvious and primitive, and it lacked and did not need any more basic underlying principles that justified its validity. However, an indirect defense of validity *was*

mounted by arguing against attacks that questioned the adequacy of the four syllogistic forms in which the basis of logical validity was expressed. These attacks held that the four syllogistic forms could not be relied upon because we could not know that they included every principle of valid inference. There is an infinite number of non-formal deductions possible, some with very complex sets of premises, and unless we have some guarantee that the syllogistic forms are able to order every possible non-formal and formal deduction, we could not comfortably suppose that a proof procedure using the four forms had grasped all the logical possibilities contained in its premises. To defend the validity of this syllogistic, Ibn Sīnā denied that the complexity or possible infinitude of the number of premises could be used as objections against the claim to have identified logical validity and its forms.

This brief presentation and defense of the syllogism provided a model for understanding the validity of poetic syllogisms. In a similar move, Ibn Sīnā first exhibits the five forms of the poetic syllogistic. However, he could not then provide for these syllogisms the defense given to their parallel case because poetic syllogisms have a distinctive character. Poetic meanings are cumulative, and the sense gained from a complex of terms is unlikely to be preserved if we try to translate the complex into a series of simple meanings, perhaps constructed by applying the five forms of the poetic syllogistic. To overcome the threat of incompleteness raised here, we could construe Ibn Sīnā as proposing that these cumulative meanings could be ordered under various themes, and their reliability thereby preserved. Similarly, faced with the possibility that there may be no end to the relation between terms in a poetic syllogistic, Ibn Sīnā pointed to the pleasure and wonder that results from our appreciation of a harmony constituted from poetic premises and suggested that these feelings serve to limit the possibility of an infinite or endless combination of terms and resultant meanings; thereby, the experience of pleasure and wonder protects the poetic syllogistic from incompleteness, for the combination of terms to yield meanings is governed by the pleasure and wonder we feel in understanding the terms in combination.

By this account, it is important to note, pleasure and wonder are a part of the *formal* structure of the poetic syllogistic, being essential to the completeness of the syllogistic and so to its validity. These feelings are not just factors added externally or arbitrarily, but serve to show that poetic syllogisms have a distinctive nature. The nature and role of these experiences of pleasure and wonder are crucial in other ways too, for they show why arguments justifying the *logical* or *formal* validity of poetry not only involve an essential reference to the subject's *participation* in aesthetic activity, but also bar *morally* unjustifiable content from poetry. These factors

reveal important aspects of the community that is formed through aesthetic appreciation and activity. In turn, although Ibn Sīnā does not develop his theory in this way, they suggest that the aesthetic use of language can support a concern with Truth. To see this, we must first consider the role of the subject in the aesthetic use of language.

### *Poetic Validity and the Subject*

Analytic thought is the clearest state of reasoning. It is achieved by “direct statement...made up of authentic and standard language.”<sup>49</sup> Its use of concepts and terms can be codified in a system of scientific reasoning. Through their use, knowledge requires compliance with the conclusions of an argument and so brings about conviction in a subject “due to the realization that the thing is what it is said to be.”<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, in an important sense, logic and language compel our agreement. A subject cannot accept the premises or grounds of evidence and the validity of an argument, yet deny the conclusion, without showing himself to be mistaken or irrational. The relation of premises to conclusion holds independently of the desires and feelings of the subject, and the conclusion is one that must be acceded to by any rational and cognizant being. That is what objectivity consists in, and compliance with the conclusion of a demonstrative argument characterizes cognitive conviction. Now, Ibn Sīnā uses this understanding of conviction, objectivity, and compulsion to show that the aesthetic use of language has a parallel way of evoking conviction. However, he also denies to this discourse a share in the cognitive interest that underlies analytic thought. Literary and poetic language “does not pertain to understanding but rather to wonder—it makes the speech pleasant and dignified.”<sup>51</sup> Rather than seek true or false generalizations about “what is recognized and immediate” in the world, the aesthetic use of language denotes our affective capacity; and it is the subjective responses of pleasure and wonder, generated in our appreciation of a harmony between elements in poetic premises, that serve to guarantee the completeness of poetic syllogistic forms.

That it shares a comparable structure with demonstrative syllogisms shows that the result of deploying poetic syllogisms is to bring about something that is other than an expression of personal preference and more than just a feeling of pleasure. This is because in figurative language we construct meanings, and this activity is both rational and pleasureable: we are pleased with the constructed meanings when they bear a harmony between elements; and to experience that pleasure we have to exercise our reason in

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

understanding the elements. That is, pleasure is occasioned by the rational process of comparing the meanings of terms involved, and we understand meanings without concern for their truth or falsity but for the balance they procure. We consider only how well the balance of terms has gauged our capacity for pleasure. Accordingly, a poet's or writer's ability is assessed by his or her skill in gaining this balance through comparison, proportion, and contrast. Consonantly, the audience exhibits its sensitivity by its facility for appreciating the author's skill in constructing figurative and other meanings. The rational component of this aesthetic response, which is brought out by the syllogistic character of the construction of meanings, is the basis of our desire to gain "imaginative" assent from others to a particular work.

The character of our response leads to the role of the subject in Ibn Sīnā's conception of aesthetic subjectivity. Aesthetic language is said to imitate the subject, and poetic or literary discourse is inter-subjective in that it depends on generating a community of feeling, where subjects gain a common response to works through mutually appreciable images, symbols, etc., in line with the five forms of poetic syllogistic and their themes. The subject is treated as the end of the process of production of aesthetic discourse, for the success of this language—our attaining a feeling of pleasure as a conclusion of a poetic syllogism—depends on the sensitivity of the subject. By contrast, the success of a demonstrative syllogism does not depend on the subject, because it carries a rational force to which the subject must submit either because of the nature of the relation between concepts in an argument or because of the way the world is. In a poetic syllogism, the criterion for success is the subject's feeling of pleasure based on grasping the meanings of terms. Consequently, aesthetic language must carry a distinctive force. As the subject's feeling of pleasure is crucial formally to the validity of the syllogism, it provides the final ground for accepting or rejecting an aesthetic use of language. Here poetic and literary discourse imitates the person in being directed essentially at their subjective nature. Agreement can only be *given* by the subject responding to a poem in the appropriate way, for the ultimate ground for their appreciation of a poem is their own experience of pleasure. Only the occurrence of the feeling will allow the subject to succeed in appreciating an aesthetic use of language, and only the occurrence of the feeling of pleasure can validate agreement or assent to the aesthetic use of language. A subject appreciates a work when he or she has the appropriate feeling in response, not when someone else does so. So, the occasioning of pleasure in one subject cannot be the basis for accepting or rejecting another's claim for the aesthetic use of language. Accordingly, one subject cannot assert of another that, on the basis of *his* feelings, *she* should appreciate a piece of literary or poetic discourse. Similarly, she cannot dismiss his claims as false on the basis of her lack

of pleasure. Only the subjects' own feelings are the basis for their own judgments; the feelings do not validate any claims about others' responses, which those others must have for themselves, individually. Discussion may occur here, of course, but because of the subjective nature of conviction, it can only succeed by persuading another subject, perhaps by pointing to features and nuances he or she may have missed or misunderstood, that it is appropriate for them to feel pleasure. Subjects must be treated as rational and feeling beings, who can only independently *give* assent to a work when they feel pleasure. Thus, poetry is inter-subjective in the dual sense of depending on the subject's common feelings and of having to treat the subject as a rational, emotional, and affective creature.

If the above shows us one of the implications of a subjective aesthetic validity, the emphasis on the subject's independence and essential contribution to constituting aesthetic discourse has other implications. Both the role of the subject and the validity of the poetic syllogisms go to show why aesthetic validity cannot be distinguished completely from moral validity or a validity gained from Truth. That is, having understood how aesthetic validity is justified, and having seen that this validity involves a necessary reference to the subject and its experience of pleasure, we can now go on to explain how the aesthetic validity of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* contributes to or sustains an access to Truth in spite of its aesthetic character.

### *From the Subject to Morality and Truth*

It may be useful to be reminded of the general thrust of the argument. As a text considered aesthetically, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* possesses a validity or force that, in important respects, must seem independent of the validity claimed for the Truths relayed through the story. Yet, at the same time, as we have argued above, both kinds of validity are essential: the text uses literary and poetic discourse because the Truths it contains are most appropriately presented in this manner. The issues of what validity can be claimed for aesthetic qualities and how these sustain a concern with the Truth are the concern of this paper. To defend the claim that poetic discourse can be appropriate to presenting these Truths, we must show how aesthetic validity is related to the validity ascribed to the text for its Truths. Only by doing so do we gain a satisfactory understanding of the structure and validity of the text as a whole. Yet, on the face of it, beauty and truth are only contingently related. The two kinds of validity seem very different, for the first seems so subjective that it is difficult to see how it might bear some essential link to objective Truths. To understand the interplay between these senses of validity, we first examined the nature of aesthetic validity, and we saw that though literary and poetic discourse was



formally subjective because it depended on feelings of pleasure, nevertheless it could claim validity for its syllogistic form. Its validity allowed aesthetic discourse the kind of cumulative and "post-rational" meanings that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* contained. What we need to do further is to show that the aesthetic qualities of the text do not only fail to contradict the nature of its content, but instead support that content. This will show us why *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is presented as a *tale*, with all the connotations of imaginative, poetic, and literary license with the Truth thereby suggested, yet is still able to be *philosophical*, with all the latter's connotations of access to the Truth. That is, because its subjective qualities would seem to preclude aesthetic discourse from any such commerce with the Truth, we must defend the claim that poetic validity can sustain the Truths Ibn Ṭufayl wants to communicate.

This commerce with the Truth may be argued for in the following way. For the sake of convenience, we may take the Truth to consist of moral and theoretical parts; and to show that the *tale* is still *philosophically* valuable we will argue that aesthetic discourse cannot be immoral and that the more truthful such discourse is, the more valuable it is aesthetically. If both these claims are acceptable, then we may conclude that the aesthetic validity of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* allows its author to represent Truths without doing the latter any damage—that is, that in important respects Ibn Ṭufayl is justified in using the *philosophical tale* as the appropriate form in which to put forward the Truth. It is worth pointing out that in making these arguments we may be going some way beyond Ibn Sīnā's claims.

Let us turn to the moral issue first. It has been said that the mix of terms in aesthetic discourse could be grasped by any rational and feeling subject so that his or her response could claim validity. However, there is another element, having to do with the actual content of any poem or literary piece: the latter may or may not be suitable for some other non-formal reason. So, for example, the form of a love story invites its author to be deeply frank about his feelings. But while such honesty remains decorous when the subject is love, it may be completely indecorous when the topic is lust, and the story may be rejected by its audience for its immoral content even though the formal structure of the story, the facility with which the author gives expression to the convolutions of emotion wrought by lust, and the order of ideas, images, and thoughts, are all excellent. Accordingly, by this conception of the rules of storytelling, there are two grounds of validity, one formal and aesthetic, the other moral and governing the content. The first is a restriction that makes the story a story, the other a restriction that makes the story acceptable in polite society. And if we can accept this distinction, then we can conceive of the same content being provided another form more appropriate than its aesthetic one.

So, for example, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* might have been found another form because the story form was inappropriate to the extent that it also permitted immoralities to be represented and thus arguably rendered it unsuitable to the moral Truths contained in Ibn Ṭufayl's vision. Of course, as it may be possible also to enhance a moral content by an aesthetic form, we may want to allow that aesthetic form is acceptable unless it enhances evil. That is, we may give precedence to moral content over aesthetic form. To do so, however, is really to give the game away, for it depends on supposing that the relation of aesthetic form to moral content can only ever be contingent, and that a philosophical *tale* is a device that is satisfactory not in itself but only when it is justified by the truth of its moral content. That is, to accept this is to hold that a tale is not justified as a form, though it may be useful when it suits a moral content; yet we have been trying all along to see how far the form is appropriate because it possesses a validity that will not subvert its moral Truths. That is, we have been seeking a necessary connection between moral content and aesthetic form.

In any case, the distinction between aesthetic form and moral content outlined in the last paragraph but one above does not fit with the account of poetic validity given above. First, the poetic syllogism, which is the source of poetic validity, is made up of terms in relation such that their meaning *is* what is yielded by their relation. It is not as if there is some independent content that is then given a certain form. The "content" is intransitive in that we cannot suppose that it is always capable of being paraphrased into some other context without any loss of meaning. Rather, the two—form and meaning—are interdependent and do not need two separate and independent justifications. Pleasure in aesthetic discourse is occasioned by the rational process of comparing meanings to grasp the sense that develops, and this pleasure is a part of the "formal" character of aesthetic discourse. As it is gained through appreciating the harmony between terms, and these are, so to speak, meaningful words and expressions, consequently, where the occurrence of pleasure is essential to the validity of these forms of the poetic syllogistic, there we may expect that the meanings or sense also are essential to the formal validity of the aesthetic discourse using that poetic syllogistic. And it is difficult to see what room there is, in this description, for a distinction between poetic validity and a content where the latter is supposed to be a matter that is given a separate validity.

Such an argument leaves open issues of moral justification and decorum; for it is possible to claim that so long as there are meanings involved, they invite moral approbation or blame. However, the account we have given of the role of the subject and the peculiar inter-subjective validity of poetry should already suggest why the proposed picture of deploying moral *or* logical validity, where the first might lead us to reject a work even though

it satisfies all the requirements of the second, or vice versa, must be artificial description. There cannot really be a conflict between moral and aesthetic validity, because the basis of validity in the subject's experience of pleasure precludes us from knowingly entertaining immoralities in an aesthetic work. Moreover, this is a *formal* requirement, not a separate moral one. Of course we must explain this further.

Our claim turns on the nature of morality. A morally good life requires balance and an exercise of judgment.<sup>52</sup> The goodness of a person's actions will depend on their place in the world—on his or her defining characteristics, in which the capacity to choose and act, to live well or badly, by his or her own choice, is an important factor. To live well we must make our own decisions, having reasons and exercising judgment not only in our understanding of the world, but also in living and behaving well in it. We must be able to appreciate the nature and depth of the balances these activities require, including the ability to live well in society with others, where we are free. Here moral awareness essentially involves the concept of a mean, and virtue is in important ways a sense of balance. Thus, where the most reliable moral agent is the least one-sided and best able to grasp the wholeness and balance of our characteristics, there we may expect that the one best able to appreciate aesthetic discourse is best able to grasp balances between terms without too one-sided an interest. Conversely, the ability to appreciate harmony can indicate a potential for moral behavior.

But something more than this analogy is suggested by the account given above, which leads us to exclude "immoral" content from constituting an aesthetically valuable work: evil may not be aesthetically pleasing, for it cannot garner the pleasure that is part of the formal character of aesthetic discourse. To explain: evil will be an imbalance—an intentional rejection of the mean and balance involved in a moral life and a commensurate stress on some one aspect. It is an imbalance that, in being evil, serves to exclude or to mis-stress some feature of ourselves. Sustaining only an emphasis on certain aspects, it cannot account for all the qualities which make us virtuous human beings. Moreover, the sense of moral balance, involving subjects in maintaining a mean in their moral personalities, can be construed as denoting a society—a collection of balanced moral personalities engaged in moral relations with each other to constitute a Virtuous City. Conversely, the evil rejection of a mean is also an exclusion from the City and its society. Moreover, the persons who are citizens of the Virtuous City are also the subjects who give assent to aesthetic discourse. This implies that an evil lack of balance cannot evoke pleasure in the way necessary

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<sup>52</sup> A summary of claims about virtue is presented in Ibn Sīnā, *Healing: Metaphysics*, Book X, translated by Michael E. Marmura in Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, *Medieval Political Philosophy: a Sourcebook* (Toronto: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 110–20.

for aesthetic appreciation, for an evil poem would have to be morally imbalanced yet procure an aesthetically pleasing balance or harmony between terms. But in the light of the theory presented above, this could not obtain, for the pleasure—this aesthetic conviction or assent—has to be *given* by the subject. Yet the partial stresses in an evil work will connote a description of society which is divisive, excluding persons who fit the moral mean. Yet those people who are excluded by the evil aesthetic discourse are also the ones who must appreciate it and constitute its aesthetic value by grasping its meanings, appreciating their balance, and *giving* it assent. That is, they would have to be prepared to thwart their own participation in the community *just when they give assent to the aesthetic discourse*. But, so far as the work, first, is evil because it depends on terms generating a moral imbalance, and, second, where our response is a matter of pleasure, in the balance of terms, through which we give assent, then, third, where we must understand the terms to appreciate the balance, there, fourth, the presence of terms containing only partial stresses will be unable to generate pleasure because the individuals excluded by those partial stresses will be prevented from assenting to an aesthetic discourse by feeling pleasure in a balance of terms which, by hypothesis, is only a partial and divisive or dissonant relation of terms. Thus, we must suppose that the balance of terms in a work can generate a pleasurable response if it is aesthetically valuable. Yet, if the work is evil, it lacks moral balance, and if it lacks balance because it is evil, the subject will be unable to respond with pleasure because there is in the poem a stress on some human characteristics above others in contrast to the virtuous mean, and the poem is evil also in that its balance excludes some subjects from appreciating it: that is, it cannot gain their assent so far as they are also excluded from the society implicated by that poem. If they are excluded, they cannot find the work aesthetically pleasing; for if they cannot give assent, the work cannot be said to be satisfactory as its aesthetic value is constituted by the subject's response. On the other hand, if the subject himself were given to the immoral balance that is subtended by an evil poem, then his response would be excluded from the Virtuous City and its mean.

Of course, the partiality of terms, stresses, and their harmony need not be obvious, and may have to be explained, even to the subjects themselves. Various psychological factors may prevent subjects from seeing that a work serves to exclude them wholly, so that the assent they may be tempted to give thwarts their participation in the virtuous community. It is clear that we can and do make such mistakes, but it is clear also that the error can be explained to the subject. But we may also insist that this explanation must take a particular form: it is not enough to dismiss a poem for having some "evil content;" it is necessary also to argue that the immoral quality

exhibits an inadequacy in the structure and *aesthetic* validity of the work itself. Similarly, the subject cannot simply be dismissed for disagreeing in his or her appraisal, but has to be persuaded and educated to the virtuous balance. Conversely, the requirement that works generate pleasure through the harmonies they contain will serve to exclude the kinds of dissonance that are generated by immoral partial stresses.

By this account of aesthetic validity, then, a fictional and aesthetic form is appropriate to the moral Truths that Ibn Ṭufayl seeks to communicate in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, for its aesthetic validity does not run counter to the moral part of the Truth he wants to relate in his story. Where we might initially have thought that the *tale* militated against the *philosophical* Truths that engage us in the story, we see now that, in relation to moral values at least, an aesthetic form does not militate against moral Truth. In the next section we will argue that aesthetic validity also gains from its relation to knowledge and Truth in another way.

### *Truth and Aesthetic Value*

We have seen that the validity of aesthetic discourse precludes immorality. Where we might have expected the subjective connotations of a *tale* to detract from the Truth, instead we see that so far as the Truths are morally valuable, the aesthetic form of the tale militates toward rather than against moral value. In order to further our appreciation of the literary form of Ibn Ṭufayl's philosophical tale, we shall argue briefly here that far from being averse to appreciation, the Truths involved in the story of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* contribute to its aesthetic value. If we can show that this is the case, then we will have gone further in justifying the form Ibn Ṭufayl has chosen for the philosophical but "post-rational" Truths he wants to communicate.

To argue that Truth is important to aesthetic validity and appreciation, we must begin with the matter of criteria for evaluation and appreciation. Works of criticism contain numerous references to various criteria: the *badī'* style insists on particular features, while previous critical works sought to encourage other criteria. In part this variety occurs because literature displays its art in diverse ways and critics are trying to articulate their responses to each work. But this variation is present also because critics' reading and evaluation of works rests on a conception of what is important in a work.

In what has gone above, we have already mentioned the presence of a pleasurable harmony of elements as a criterion for aesthetic validity and evaluation; and in what follows, the presence of a harmonious and deep unity of elements will be taken as a ground for evaluating works positively. The two are not always thought to be aesthetically significant. At least in

the twentieth century we have seen modernists decry the need for unity, which they usually see as an Aristotelian unity of plot. Similarly, Pop Art thrives on shallowness—in color, in its penchant for gimmickery, in its concern for ephemera—even if it retains a serious interest in the world it refers to in works. In spite of this “modern” trend, “unity” or “harmony” and “depth” are useful because they are the concepts involved in the theories that concern us.

To explain the role of Truth, we may take a tale like *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, the structure of which depends among other things upon the actions and development of a character. The actions the character performs and the reasons put forward in explanation of his behavior and development go to make up the tale. Now, the latter may be thought better aesthetically if it gives us a fuller understanding of the character and the Truths he discovers at the same time as the sequence of the narrative is united in the structure of the story. The more necessary detail or acuity its author exhibits in developing the character and, in this case, relating the development of his character in the context of the story, or the more deeply the problems and their resolution in the story touch some unavoidable features of our conception of ourselves as human beings, the better a work we shall think it. It will be richer than another work that has less to say of the fundamental human motivations and grasp of Truths, and the harmony procured for its elements will be the more valuable the more detail and depth those elements contain.

This suggests that we look to the truthfulness of actions and events. But “truthfulness” is not to be understood by reference to events that actually occurred. Rather, it must be understood in terms of the plausibility of the actions and events being described, which, in the case of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, parallel what its author takes to be a paradigmatic human development towards a final communion with the True and Sacred Presence. A work will be valued for providing a better understanding of these factors, and this claim seems to involve a conception of the story as having to do with explanations of actions and motivations, in that the events in the story are plausible to the extent that it exhibits the reasons for the occurrence and nature of the events that it depicts. That is, for the sequence of events and actions in the story to be satisfactorily understandable and recognizable as actions and Truths, they must satisfy the requirements of explanation put forward in Ibn Ṭufayl’s work itself. In other words, there may be instances where works are found implausible because they relate, say, an account of human development that differs from the one proposed by Ibn Ṭufayl. Where they do so, the works will be found unsatisfactory by the standards of the conception implicit in Ibn Ṭufayl’s work. That is, the story is constituted by the actions, thoughts, motivations, and world of its

protagonist. The plot, the story and order of which are formed by following and relating the actions of the characters, the narrative which is moved by the mechanisms governing actions, motivations, and the developing self-understanding of our character—these, among other things, make up the work itself. The story may be much more than the Truths it relates through the actions and development of its characters, but it is nothing apart from those characters and events.

This account suggests other implications. As its structure is made up of such events, actions, and character development, then any implausibility that the story possesses in this regard may be understood as an incoherence in the depiction of events, actions, and character. But such incoherence has other implications, for where a story is implausible because it misrepresents or mis-explains the actions, motivations, and development of its characters, there we will find incoherence in the structure of the work. There will be disruption in the sense that the sequence of events will be found inconsistent, ambiguous, or unexplained in some measure at some point in the structure of the story. But this fault in the structure has yet other consequences, for it means that the work lacks cohesion or unity because the actions and events fail to follow the order we might expect of them if they are to be plausible. That is, the implausibility of actions and events, which is seen in the incoherence of the depicted sequence of events and actions, leads us to doubt the unity of the sequence of events—and here the latter make up the structure of the story. But “unity” or “harmony” is an aesthetic criterion also; so that its absence is a reason for finding a work aesthetically unsatisfactory. Accordingly, the aesthetic evaluation of a work by reference to the presence or absence of harmony or unity is explained ultimately by the Truths embodied in the actions and events depicted in the story. It suggests why the story will be found better aesthetically if it gives us a better understanding of its Truths at the same time as the sequence of its events has a harmonious unity in the structure of the story. And the access of a story to the Truth will clearly be better the more of those Truths it makes available. That is, the deeper we will think the story for the greater access to Truth that it gives us. And the more successful the harmony of elements of our deeper access to the Truth—that is, the deeper the Truth and the more diverse the elements held in harmony in the story—the better we shall think it aesthetically. In other words, its Truth is essential to the aesthetic character and value of the story; and this yields what we wanted to infer: the aesthetic validity of the philosophical *tale* does not preclude it gaining access to the Truth.

This position may be contrasted with another which holds, first, that the only questions important to aesthetic evaluation concern how well or badly ideas are expressed or embodied in a story, and, second, that Truth

is not important to how well ideas are embodied. Ibn Sīnā seems to suggest something like the second position when he argues that the truth or falsity of premises is irrelevant to their aesthetic character,<sup>53</sup> while al-Fārābī, in his book on *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, proposes something similar to the first position.<sup>54</sup> By this account, the Truth is dispensible to aesthetic appreciation. Given that we are concerned with the aesthetic use of language, our concern with actions and events is not so much in evincing Truths as in gaining a harmony of elements or in excellence in expression.

Plausible though this may seem, we may question both its assertions. First, it is not clear why expression or embodiment of ideas should be incommensurable with Truth. To be successful, the assertion requires some way of characterizing the supposedly distinctive nature of the aesthetic use of language so that a concern with Truth is precluded. This has not been shown, but has merely been implied in the assertion. Indeed, it is not clear what a satisfactory expression can be if it requires us to abjure all questions of Truth, for surely the expression or embodiment of ideas can be found inadequate or bad precisely because it involves false representations. That is, second, Truth is very material to whether we find expressions and ideas embodied in a satisfactory way, for we judge their depth by their Truth. A shallow unity may please us, but it pales in comparison with our sense that the ideas and elements in harmony in a work are Truthful, for that also makes them more important and shows us that we are in touch with some crucial and meaningful understanding of ourselves in the world.

### *Conclusion*

In summary, the issues of what validity can be claimed for aesthetic qualities and how it sustains a concern with the Truth have been the concern of this paper. To consider these issues, we began by examining the nature of poetic validity and have now argued that poetic validity is compatible with and militates toward a grasp of Truths. In making these arguments, our concern has been to explain and justify the form Ibn Ṭufayl chose for his story. Where we might have feared for the validity of our text because of its aesthetic character, the arguments given above suggest that the aesthetic form of a "philosophical tale" is naturally appropriate to the Truths Ibn Ṭufayl wants to communicate in his story. In this I hope it has lead to a more complete understanding of the nature and purpose of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.

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<sup>53</sup>Cf. *Remarks and Admonishments*.

<sup>54</sup>Al-Fārābī, *The Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, edited and translated by Muhsin Mahdi (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 73–75.



## CHAPTER NINE

### PHILOSOPHICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY: MOSHE NARBONI'S INTRODUCTION TO HIS COMMENTARY ON *ḤAYY IBN YAQẒĀN*

Larry B. Miller

(Catholic University of America)

Moses ben Yehošu'a of Narbonne (d. 1362), also known as Maestre Vidal Bellsom and Moshe Narboni,<sup>1</sup> was a Jewish philosopher from southern France who turned westward for his inspiration—not to the Latin West, but to the Islamic West, to the Muslim and Jewish philosophers of Spain such as Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139), Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185–86), Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), and Maimonides (d. 601/1204). He wrote an important and as yet unpublished commentary on Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*.

It is chiefly on the basis of a number of autobiographical remarks that Narboni makes in his various writings—mainly commentaries on philosophical subjects—that modern scholars since Munk have given him the follow-

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<sup>1</sup>Professor Maurice Hayoun of the University of Strasbourg was kind enough to provide me with the proofs for his article, "Le commentaire de Moïse de Narbonne (1300–1362) sur le *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* d'Ibn Ṭufayl (mort en 1185)," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 63 (1988), pp. 23–99. The latter contains numerous translations from Narboni's commentary and has been helpful to me in formulating my own ideas. Hayoun's most recent and important work, *La philosophie et la théologie de Moïse de Narbonne (1300–1362)* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), contains detailed discussions of Narboni and his work. As I was only able to consult it after finishing work on this paper, I have not cited it further. Hayoun has published a non-critical edition (based on Ms. Hebrew 916 of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris) of Narboni's introduction to his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* as an appendix to his article "Moïse de Narbonne: Sur les *Sefirot*, les sphères, et les intellects séparés: Édition critique d'un passage de son commentaire sur le *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqẓān* d'Ibn Ṭufayl, avec introduction, traduction, et notes," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 76 (1985), pp. 145–47—henceforth cited as *Introduction*. I have also consulted Leiden Ms. Or. 4744 (Warner 6), a microfilm copy of which Professor Alfred Ivry was kind enough to send me. The text begins on fol. 124r. All Ms. references, unless otherwise stated, are to this Ms. I have also been able to consult Ms. Hebrew 915 of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

ing biography.<sup>2</sup> He was born around the end of the thirteenth century in Perpignan, and began studying Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* at the age of thirteen;<sup>3</sup> he was a practicing physician; he knew at least some Arabic;<sup>4</sup> and most of his works were composed in Spain.<sup>5</sup>

He apparently labored under adverse conditions. From information in his commentary on Ibn Rushd's *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect*,<sup>6</sup> it has been concluded that the work was "written in Perpignan under conditions of siege and warfare."<sup>7</sup> It may also be concluded, on the basis of remarks in his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, and more specifically, in his medical treatise *Sefer oraḥ ḥayyim*, that he had to deal with the bubonic plague and the consequent outbreak of antisemitism.<sup>8</sup>

The aforementioned works are related both biographically<sup>9</sup> and thematically. Narboni maintains that Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is an "explanation of the nature of the apprehension (*haśśagah*) achieved when man's hylic intellect is conjoined with the active intellect."<sup>10</sup> Narboni includes in his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* an additional commentary

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<sup>2</sup>I have consulted the following sources on Narboni's biography: Alfred L. Ivry, art. "Moses Ben Joshua" in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971-72), XII, 422-23; Solomon Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1927), pp. 502-506; Ernest Renan and Adolf Neubauer, *Les écrivains juifs français du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1893), pp. 320-35; Moritz Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin: Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen Bureau, 1893), pp. 311, 363-68; Gerrit Bos, "R. Moshe Narboni, Philosopher and Physician: a Critical Analysis of *Sefer oraḥ ḥayyim*," *Medieval Encounters*, 1 (1995), pp. 219-51. (I am grateful to Dr. Bos for making a copy of his article available to me prior to publication.) Steinschneider (p. 313) calls Narboni "der letzte hervorragende Freigeist der jüdischen Philosophen des Mittelalters bis zur Renaissance."

<sup>3</sup>This "fact" may rest on the premise that only mature young men (those who are *bar mizvah*) should study the *Guide*.

<sup>4</sup>Ivry, "Moses Ben Joshua," p. 422; *contra* Steinschneider, *Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 312. The matter has been settled by the findings of Bos in his "R. Moshe Narboni," pp. 221-22.

<sup>5</sup>Ivry points out that Narboni lived in a number of Spanish cities, including Cervera, Barcelona, Soria, Toledo, and Burgos; see his "Moses Ben Joshua," p. 422; also Munk, *Mélanges*, pp. 503-505.

<sup>6</sup>Kalman Bland, *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect by Ibn Rushd with the Commentary of Moses Narboni* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1982), pp. 110 (trans.), 150:65 (text).

<sup>7</sup>See Ivry, "Moses Ben Joshua," p. 423; Bland, *Epistle*, p. 132 n. 16. Cf. also below, lemma 7.

<sup>8</sup>Ivry, "Moses Ben Joshua," p. 423; Bos, "R. Moshe Narboni," p. 220. Also cf. below, lemma 8.

<sup>9</sup>See below, lemma 7.

<sup>10</sup>Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 22 (trans.), 3:35-36 (text). Cf. *Introduction*, p. 146:15. The term *haśśagah*, derived from the root *n-ś-g*, is also used for "apprehension [of the active intellect]," and is similar in meaning to Arabic *idrāk*.

on Ibn Bājja's *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid* (Heb. *Hanhagat ha-mitboded*),<sup>11</sup> since it too dealt with the same theme.<sup>12</sup> He discusses the theoretical basis for conjunction (Ar. *ittiṣāl*, Heb. *devequt*) in his earlier commentary<sup>13</sup> on Ibn Rushd's *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction*, where he specifically refers to his intention to comment on Ibn Ṭufayl's book.<sup>14</sup> The two works are thus closely related.

And yet the introductions<sup>15</sup> to the two works are remarkably different. The commentary on Ibn Rushd begins with a brief reflection on the nature of human happiness (*ḥaṣḥaḥ*). This happiness, he says, is only attainable "if it is possible that the active [intellect] be conjoined in perception with us."<sup>16</sup> His introduction to his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, on the other hand, is replete with personal remarks, detailing all the obstacles that stood in his path.<sup>17</sup> This difference of approach between the two introductions reflects their relationship to one another as theory to practice, the impersonal to the personal.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it is only at the end of the work

<sup>11</sup> Narboni's commentary to this work has been edited twice: first by David Herzog in *Qobeṣ 'al Yad*, 6 (1896), pp. 3–23; and recently by Maurice Hayoun in *Da'at*, 18 (1987), pp. 27–44.

<sup>12</sup> *Introduction*, p. 146:14.

<sup>13</sup> He completed this work in 1344 (AM 5104), and completed the commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* on the eve of Pentecost 1349 (AM 5109) in Barcelona. Cf. Steinschneider, *Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 367; Renan, *Écrivains*, pp. 326–27, 329. Hayoun gives the date of composition as 1348 in both "La tradition manuscrite des oeuvres de Moïse de Narbonne (1300–1362)," *Revue d'histoire des textes*, 14–15 (1984–85), p. 349; and "Commentaire," p. 97. According to Ibn Bājja, conjunction with what is intellectuated is only conjunction with the spiritual form: *fa-inna ittiṣāl al-insān bi-l-ma'qūl innamā huwa bi-l-ṣūra al-rūḥānīya*. See Ibn Bājja, *Ittiṣāl al-'aql bi-l-insān*, in *Rasā'il Ibn Bājja al-ilāhīya* (Opera metaphysica), edited by Majid Fakhry (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1968), p. 164:5.

<sup>14</sup> Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 22 (trans.), 3:30–36 (text). Narboni explicitly states his intention to comment on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in at least two places: pp. 22, 110 (trans.), 3:35–36, 149:64–65 (text). At the end of this work, he beseeches God "to conduct him to the isle of felicity," which he previously identified with the Garden of Eden; see pp. 110 (trans.), 149:55 (text). This must be an allusion to the island on which Ḥayy grows up, and thus to his prospective commentary. Cf. Narboni's *Hanhagat*, p. 34 (Hayoun); p. 7 (Herzog).

<sup>15</sup> By the word "introduction," I refer to that part of the work prior to the commentary that usually contains prayers and praise to God, similar to what is found in the *khuṭba* of an Arabic book. The beginning of the commentary is signalled by the phrase *ve-aḥar ha-šebaḥ la-el*, "after praise to God." Hayoun has translated the entire passage under discussion in "Commentaire," pp. 32ff. Cf. Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 22–23 (trans.), 3:36–38 (text).

<sup>16</sup> Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 22 (trans.), 3:30–31 (text).

<sup>17</sup> Consider lemmata 5–10 below.

<sup>18</sup> Perhaps this explains the distinction he draws between "external" and "internal" obstacles in lemma 7. The quest for the attainment of happiness, as opposed to a theoretical discussion of happiness, is something that engages us in relation both to ourselves, internally, and to the world, externally.

on *Conjunction*, after he has spoken of his intention to comment on *Ḥayy*, that he mentions “the many impediments from without” that stood in the way of his writing that commentary.<sup>19</sup> It is as though his turning from the theoretical to the practical occasions him to make these personal remarks.

In what follows, I wish to explore Narboni’s autobiographical introduction to his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* in light of his philosophical concern with conjunction with the active intellect. It is my contention that Narboni details these autobiographical “facts” in order to express more general philosophical Truth about the attainment of happiness.<sup>20</sup>

Maurice Hayoun has recently published the Hebrew text of the introduction to Narboni’s commentary and has also translated it elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> As the text is still not critically edited and relatively unknown, I will give a partial translation (marking the lemmata in brackets) and summary of its contents, and then discuss its “personal” character.

Narboni’s introduction to his commentary begins as follows:

[1] Having finished our commentary on the treatise that the philosopher Ibn Rushd composed *On the Possibility of Conjunction* (*devequt*) with the active [intellect], we can also try to comment allusively (*lirmoz remez mah*)<sup>22</sup> on the epistle of conjunction (*devequt*) which the perfectly wise man, the author of this epistle, achieved.<sup>23</sup> This is possible for us to do in theory. [2] But in practice, this is impossible (*nimna*)<sup>24</sup> at this time for our generation.<sup>25</sup> [3] We promised this [commentary] at the end of our commentary *On the Possibility of Conjunction*. [4] However, we were prevented from doing this by certain troubles of the time and our preoccupation with other theoretical matters. [5] And when God decreed separation (*peridah*), I was

<sup>19</sup>Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 110 (trans.), 150:65 (text).

<sup>20</sup>It is not my intention to question whether these things occurred or not. Rather, I wish to shed some light on the factors that motivated Narboni to write about them.

<sup>21</sup>See n. 1 above.

<sup>22</sup>Or, “to hint at somewhat;” cf. Hayoun, “Commentaire,” p. 32 n. 4: “faire quelque allusion.” Narboni follows Ibn Ṭufayl’s opinion that this Truth can only be hinted at. For the import of the word *remez*, see J.C. Bürgel’s contribution to this volume, pp. 117–22 above; and Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 105 (trans.), 140:43–141:51 (text).

<sup>23</sup>Literally, “grasped, apprehended,” Heb. *hiśśig*, which shares a common root with *haśśagah*, “apprehension.” Cf. above, n. 2. Steinschneider (*Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 367 n. 802) notes that “das Wort *hiśśig* passt nicht für *’iggeret*, welches überflüssig scheint.” This forced usage of the word is an indication of Narboni’s preoccupation with conjunction. Perhaps he meant to hint at “the conjunction that [Ibn Ṭufayl] achieved.” Alternatively, he avoids using the title *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, since its connection to Ibn Rushd’s epistle is not immediately apparent.

<sup>24</sup>Literally, “prevented.”

<sup>25</sup>We should be careful not to overstress this statement. See below, p. 236.

compelled to distance my dwelling from the dwellings of the princes of Israel. . . who find favor in His eyes; who philosophize (*maškilim be-ḥokhmah*); [6] who have chosen me, and I them, to bestow (*le-ḥašpi'a*)<sup>26</sup> upon them its Truth, as it comes to me, and roused me (*'oreruni*)<sup>27</sup> to explain to them what was promised and to comment upon this epistle [*Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*].

However, [7] negligence and personal cares stood in the way of his will [to do so] (*raṣon*), and then troubles came, greater than those that afflicted him at the time that he wrote his commentary on the *Possibility of Conjunction*. Then, they were "external and of a general kind (*miḥuṣ ve-'al derekh kolel*),"<sup>28</sup> while now they are "internal and of a particular kind (*mibifnim u-ve-yiḥud*)." [8] The present troubles—plague and persecution—astonish him, so that he falls on his face and cries out to God to spare Barcelona,<sup>29</sup> "which was the first source bearing the vitality (*ḥiyyut*)<sup>30</sup> of our exile (*galut*) in this land whose station (*ezor*) is that of the heart to man, and which is the center of our fortune."<sup>31</sup> Wherein does Your ordering (*siddur*) and

<sup>26</sup>This is the same verb used in the sense of emanation, similar to Arabic *fāda*.

<sup>27</sup>This seems to play on the causative sense of the Hebrew root *'-v-r*, in the sense of "to awaken, arouse, make aware." Consider the following passage which plays on this root and the other important root of Ḥayy's name, *ḥ-y-h*, in the sense of "life, living being," etc. Narboni gives four reasons (Hayoun, "Sur les *Sefirot*," p. 146:23ff.; Ms. fol. 124v:35ff.) to explain why Ibn Ṭufayl allowed Ḥayy to grow up in solitude. The fourth reason is "to show that in isolation this perfection [of conjunction] can be achieved (*ki bi-bedidut yuśśag zeh ha-šelemut*). He called the name of this solitary [person] Ḥayvan ben Yakton, meaning 'Living, the son of Awake (*Ḥayy ben Yaqeṣ*, see below) in order to make [us] aware (*le-ḥa'ir*) that this is what the one who wishes to live eternally (*liḥyot he-ḥayyim ha-niṣḥiyyim*) does, and that he is aware (reading *'er* for Ms. *'od*; it is common for copyists to confuse *resh* and *dalet*) of the quest for the intelligibles (*be-baqqāṣat ha-muškaloṭ*). Therefore, I have called him Yeḥi'el ibn 'Uri'el ('he whom God has brought to life', the son of 'he whom God has awakened')." In Hayoun's text he gives the name *Ḥayy ben Meqīṣ* (p. 146:29), but this seems to be a variant reading. Hayoun has also translated this passage in "Commentaire," p. 35; cf. Steinschneider, *Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 365; Renan, *Écrivains*, 329. Narboni was apparently fond of puns on the titles of his works. Cf. his *Ma'amar be-shelemut ha-nefesh*, edited by Alfred L. Ivry (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1977), p. 15 of the Hebrew introduction and p. 3:12ff. of the Hebrew text.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Bland, *Epistle*, pp. 110 (trans.), 150:65–68 (text).

<sup>29</sup>Where he finished his commentary in 1349. See above, n. 13.

<sup>30</sup>The word derives from the Hebrew *ḥ-y-h*, which is cognate to Arabic *ḥ-y-y* and reminds us of the protagonist Ḥayy. According to Hayoun (p. 33 n. 10) this has the sense of "survivants, débris et rescapés."

<sup>31</sup>Literally, "whose zone is that of our zodiac." Hayoun omitted this phrase from his edition ("Sur les *Sefirot*," p. 145:25) and from his translation ("Commentaire," p. 33). The Leiden Ms., fol. 124v:3, and Paris Ms. 915 both read *we-ezoraḥ ezor galgaleynu*. The term *ezor* seems to be equivalent to Arabic *minṭaqa*, while the word *galgal* is equivalent to Arabic *falak*; cf. R.P.A. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden: E.J.

governance (*hanhagah*)<sup>32</sup> of the existents consist if not in the preservation of the most chosen people... who especially excel in intellection (*haśkalah*) and continued [conjunction] (*hamśakhah*)?" [9] Contemplating the magnitude of the slaughter, "I said: 'I shall hide until the moment when this wrath (*za'am*)<sup>33</sup> will pass, and that which brought me to comment on the first treatise<sup>34</sup> will bring me to comment on this treatise, since I did not believe that I would remain alive (*be-hayyay*<sup>35</sup> *ešša'er*).'" With the "doubling of the troubles, so too the magnitude and value of what was to be obtained (*ha-muśśag*)<sup>36</sup> was doubled." Narboni saw that:

[10] in order to satisfy the will (*raṣon*) of my brothers,<sup>37</sup> because of the distance between myself and the honorable [members] of society, those seekers of [philosophical] wisdom (*hokhmah*) in the city of Perpignan, I was forced to instruct in the third manner of instruction, which is the epistle (*mikhtav*). That is the best that we can do.<sup>38</sup>

Narboni closes his introduction by praising God, who, among other things:

[11] ...in his kindness, will guide (*yišur*)<sup>39</sup> us to the Truth... God will have mercy upon his people who cleave (*daveq*)<sup>40</sup> unto Him... who bestows (*maqneh*)<sup>41</sup> order (*siddur*) and rank

Brill, 1881), II, 692b, s.v. *mintaqā*. For the meaning of the term *galgal*, cf. Arthur Hyman's *Averroes' De Substantia Orbis* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1986), p. 39 n. 1.

<sup>32</sup>This is the reading of both Ms. fol. 124v:3 and Paris Ms. 915. Hayoun's *Introduction*, p. 145:25, reads *ve-hadragatka*.

<sup>33</sup>Isaiah 26:20.

<sup>34</sup>I.e. the *Epistle on Conjunction*. Cf. Hayoun, "Commentaire," p. 34 n. 12.

<sup>35</sup>Again, this word derives from Hebrew *h-y-h*. Cf. above, n. 27.

<sup>36</sup>Cf. above, n. 23.

<sup>37</sup>Similarly, Ibn Ṭufayl addresses his work to his "brother." In commenting on this, Narboni notes the conventional character of such dedications (Ms. fol. 125v:6ff.). He later refers to Ibn Bājja's *Farewell Epistle*—see the edition by Miguel Asín Palacios in *Al-Andalus*, 8 (1943), p. 16:10–16—and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 993b11–15 in Ibn Rushd's commentary—see Ibn Rushd's *Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, edited by Maurice Bouyges (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1948–52), I, 9:8–10:2—in noting that true brotherhood occurs between people related in spirit, not in body. Narboni expresses similar thoughts in *Ma'amar*, p. 2:9ff.

<sup>38</sup>Literally, "It is not possible for us to achieve (*haśśagah*) a greater amount (*ši'ur*)."

<sup>39</sup>Cf. Hyman, *Averroes' De Substantia Orbis*, p. 73 n. 100.

<sup>40</sup>This word is from the same root as *devequt*, "conjunction." Cf. his praise of the Jewish people above in lemma 8.

<sup>41</sup>If in using this epithet Narboni is alluding to the acquired intellect (*ha-śekhel ha-niqneh*), he would be identifying God with the active intellect. E.I.J. Rosenthal made a similar suggestion in "Political Ideas in Moshe Narboni's Commentary on Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," in *Hommage à Georges Vajda*, edited by Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), p. 229.

(*hadragah*) which is apparent in all the existents; may He bestow (*yaqneh*) on us true praise and suitable order.

This ends the formal introduction to Narboni's commentary.

The introduction begins on a strange note. After writing a treatise in which he asserts that man's happiness consists in achieving conjunction with the active intellect, he begins his commentary by denying that conjunction is possible for us "at this time in our generation." While he has promised to give us practical instruction about the nature of conjunction, he now says that he can only approach his subject theoretically, and will comment allusively. Does this mean that man's ultimate felicity cannot be realized?

In fact, what he denies explicitly he affirms implicitly, or allusively. For example, practically the entire introduction is devoted to the theme of conjunction and separation, of unfulfilled and fulfilled intentions: separation from the active intellect and the impossibility of conjunction,<sup>42</sup> lack of immediate fulfillment of promises<sup>43</sup> due to internal and external obstacles,<sup>44</sup> separation from his community of believers and especially from his fellow philosophers,<sup>45</sup> and separation from the recipients of his commentary.<sup>46</sup> Yet his praise of the Jewish people for their excellence in "intellection and continued [conjunction]" implies that conjunction is possible.<sup>47</sup>

Another indication of this is the way in which he presents himself to his readers: he implicitly compares himself to both Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān and Ibn Ṭufayl. He imitates Ḥayy in separating himself from Jewish society in Perpignan,<sup>48</sup> and in hiding until "the wrath" passes.<sup>49</sup> He compares himself to Ḥayy by his usage of words playing on his name.<sup>50</sup> He imitates Ibn Ṭufayl in making his commentary an "epistle" (*mikhtav*) addressed to his "brothers,"<sup>51</sup> and in his use of allusive language in his commentary.<sup>52</sup>

The best indication that he thinks conjunction is possible occurs at the beginning of the commentary proper.<sup>53</sup> There, he notes that:

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<sup>42</sup>In lemmata 1-2.

<sup>43</sup>In lemmata 1, 3.

<sup>44</sup>In lemmata 4, 7, 8.

<sup>45</sup>In lemmata 5, 6, 9.

<sup>46</sup>In lemma 10.

<sup>47</sup>Cf. above, lemmata 9, 11.

<sup>48</sup>God's decree of separation could be interpreted as an act of providence, not punishment.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. above, lemmata 5, 9.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. above, lemmata 6 n. 18, 8 n. 21, 9 n. 25.

<sup>51</sup>See above, lemma 10 and n. 27.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, edited by Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), pp. 3:4, 11:11ff.

<sup>53</sup>*Introduction*, p. 146:4ff.; cf. above, n. 27.

Not every prophet acknowledges that he is a prophet...Not every doctor of the soul and not every doctor<sup>54</sup> of the body practices his art, [for reasons which he cannot explain at this place, but will hint at in this treatise]. Know that one should judge a man's deeds and words according to [his] time and generation. So it occurs that there are those who boast of this perfection that have not achieved (*hiššig*) total conjunction (*dibbuq*)<sup>55</sup> with the active [intellect]...So too it is possible that there be someone who has achieved (*hiššig*) it, but attributed it to someone else; but their perfection compels him in a way that he [only] reveal it to [another] who has attained perfection.<sup>56</sup>

Narboni implicitly invites the reader to apply the above paragraph to what he says in the introduction, in which he attributes conjunction to Ibn Ṭufayl. Indeed, he later explains Ibn Ṭufayl's opinion that:<sup>57</sup>

in our generation, this conjunction is impossible whenever the person seeking conjunction (*ha-mitdabbeq*) is part of a political group (*qibbuṣ medini*), since no one will assist him; rather, the person who gathers knowledge encounters opposition on account of their loathing of wisdom (*hokhmah*) and their hatred of people [who pursue it], due to its absence from them.<sup>58</sup>

Narboni implies that his unrestricted denial of the possibility of conjunction for "his generation" may stand in need of revision. It is only when "the person seeking conjunction is part of a political group (or society)" that conjunction is impossible; but in his introduction, he emphasizes his separation from society.

Narboni's personal remarks in the introduction to his commentary on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* thus reflect his preoccupation with conjunction. Perhaps he believed that he had actually achieved it,<sup>59</sup> but did not wish to reveal it.

<sup>54</sup>Narboni was a practicing physician and medical author. See Renan, *Écrivains*, p. 330; Steinschneider, *Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, p. 312 n. 327; and now the detailed discussion in Bos, "R. Moshe Narboni," pp. 219–51.

<sup>55</sup>Reading *kol ha-dibbuq 'im ha-nifrad* with Ms. fol. 124v:24 and Paris Ms. 915, as opposed to *Introduction*, p. 146.

<sup>56</sup>Cf. Hayoun, "Commentaire," pp. 34–35 n. 16; Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 11:11.

<sup>57</sup>*Introduction*, p. 146:15ff.; Hayoun, "Commentaire," p. 35.

<sup>58</sup>Narboni reveals his low opinion of the masses in his introduction to his commentary on Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed*. Cf. Maurice Hayoun, *Moshé Narboni, Edition hébraïque partielle du commentaire sur le Guide des égarés de Maïmonide avec introduction, traduction et notes* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986), pp. 125 (text), 35 (trans.).

<sup>59</sup>Consider his usage of the word *le-hašpi'a* in lemma 6.



In any event, his imitation of both Ibn Ṭufayl and Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān implies that in respect to their conjunction with the active intellect, they are all one and the same. He is following a tradition the most famous proponent of which was Ibn Bājja.<sup>60</sup> But religious affiliation poses no obstacle to the understanding: both Muslim and Jewish seekers of conjunction are brothers in their search for eternal happiness.<sup>61</sup> In this light, Narboni's "personal" introduction assumes a more impersonal appearance.

There can be little doubt that Narboni chose to comment on this work because of his belief in the possibility of conjunction. Indeed, his commentary seems to indicate that he accepted literally Ibn Ṭufayl's implicit claim that a work written in the manner of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* was an legitimate intervention in the task of philosophy, and that its meaningfulness transcended the bounds of the Muslim community. For him, the work was not just an allegory or, as Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) would have put it, a "thought experiment" concerning the ability of a human being to attain happiness (or salvation) through conjunction with the active intellect, but rather an authoritative guide to all human beings desirous of attaining ultimate happiness through conjunction. Narboni overlays the story of his own life, his "biography," upon the context of Ibn Ṭufayl's presentation of the fictional "biography" of Ḥayy. The details of Narboni's own "biography" are of little import, except for the underlying Truth that Narboni was convinced they conveyed: conjunction, however brief, is actual and possible for those who pursue wisdom through reading *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* with his own accompanying commentary.

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<sup>60</sup>For references, see M. Blaustein, "Aspects of Ibn Bajja's Theory of Apprehension," in *Maimonides and Philosophy*, edited by Shlomo Pines and Yirmeyahu Yovel (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986), p. 202. Also worth consulting is Muḥammad Ṣaghīr Ḥasan Ma'sūmī, *Ibn Bajjah's 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1961), pp. 153–54 n. 54.

<sup>61</sup>Narboni (*Introduction*, p. 146:24ff.) gives as a second reason for Ibn Ṭufayl's allowing Ḥayy to grow up in isolation: "to hint that nothing described here is said on account of bias, or prior opinion, but it is free of all habit (*hergel*) and custom (*minhag*), since custom is a great impediment to the acquisition of the Truth (*haśśagat ha-emet*)."

## CHAPTER TEN

### THROUGH THE THIN VEIL: ON THE QUESTION OF COMMUNICATION AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN *ḤAYY IBN YAQZĀN*

Lawrence I. Conrad  
(Wellcome Institute)

Of the numerous questions that arise in the interpretation of a text, one of obvious and particular importance is that of the primary goal that motivated the author to set pen to paper. That is, is it possible to identify an overarching concern or argument that all else in the book serves to sustain and communicate in one way or another, and to which all else is essentially secondary? As George F. Hourani set this question, with reference to Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*: "What is this book primarily about?"<sup>1</sup>

Such a question is one of considerable intrinsic difficulty. Examination of the contents of a book may reveal a sense of proportion or a particular trend of argument, but determining the ultimate purpose to which such elements were directed by the author takes analysis into very subjective and uncertain areas. In the case of Ibn Ṭufayl, such problems are especially difficult. Although sources external to his famous *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* provide important information about his public life and career in the service of the Muwaḥḥids,<sup>2</sup> they reveal almost nothing about his background, education, professional training, or personal life or views. Modern discussions have often failed to take this problem into account, and have tended to embrace rather simplistic comparisons between Ibn Ṭufayl's famous hero and the author himself. It is presumably the looming shadow of *Ḥayy*, spiced with a good measure of romance and prejudice, that has produced such deliverances as this: "He was the *dilettante* of the philosophers of the West, and

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<sup>1</sup>George F. Hourani, "The Principal Subject of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 15 (1956), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>See Lawrence I. Conrad, "An Andalusian Physician at the Court of the Muwaḥḥids: Some Notes on the Public Career of Ibn Ṭufayl," *Al-Qanṭara*, 16 (1995), pp. 3–12; also the Introduction above, pp. 18–22.

was more given to contemplative enjoyment than scientific work. Rarely did he set himself to write.”<sup>3</sup>

This dearth contrasts sharply with the richness of the text itself, but here the reader is overwhelmed by the question of what all this means. Elements of medicine and natural science, philosophy, mysticism, and theology intertwine to form a narrative landscape full of familiar images, sudden surprises, echoes of earlier formulations, and variations in mood and spirit.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps most problematic of all, near the end of his book the author offers the warning that between the reader and what he really means to communicate he has drawn what he calls a “thin veil” (*ḥijāb laṭīf*):

In any case, we have not left these secrets set forth in these few short pages without a thin veil, one quickly torn aside by him who deserves to do so, but which becomes so thick before the man unworthy of passing beyond it that he will never be able to step past it.<sup>5</sup>

Assuming that Ibn Ṭufayl did not wish his work to be completely impenetrable, or to pursue his image, that it was his intention that some should in fact pass through his “thin veil,” what was it that he placed beyond for the reader to find?

Considering the richness and complexity of the text, it is surprising that for centuries such a question was never investigated. Indeed, it was simply taken for granted that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* recounted the triumph of the *philosophus autodidactus* and sought to establish the possibility of the ascent of the soul, through the unaided power of the active intellect, to knowledge of transcendent mystical truth. As Edward Pococke proclaimed on the title page to his *editio princeps* and Latin translation of 1671, the work demonstrated “by what means human reason can ascend from contemplation of the Inferior to knowledge of the Superior.”<sup>6</sup> This view prevailed through all discussions prior to the beginning of the twentieth century; and as intimated above, its validity was apparently considered to be so self-evident as to obviate any need for a formal argument in its defense.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup>T.J. de Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, translated by Edward R. Jones (London: Luzac, 1903), p. 182.

<sup>4</sup>See above, pp. 22–34, 36.

<sup>5</sup>Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, edited by Léon Gauthier, 2nd edition (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936), pp. 155–56.

<sup>6</sup>*Philosophus autodidactus, sive epistola Abi Jaafar, Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan. In qua Ostenditur, quomodo ex Inferiorum contemplatione ad Superiorum notitiam Ratio humana ascendere possit* (Oxford: H. Hall, 1671).

<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Léon Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail, sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1909), pp. 63–65; Miguel Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana* (Madrid: Asociación Española para el progreso de las ciencias, 1957), I, 375–77, 390–91.

In more recent times, however, the question has become a matter of dispute revolving around the explanations proposed by Léon Gauthier in 1909 and George F. Hourani in 1956. Though much stimulating discussion has been devoted to the matter, it must be said that serious objections can be raised to both positions, and that the practically exclusive emphasis on the work as an intervention in the task of philosophy has shouldered aside other very important dimensions of the text. Hence, renewed examination of the question of what Ibn Ṭufayl sought to communicate to his readers seems to be in order. Expanding the scope of inquiry to considerations beyond those bearing on philosophy at the same time places us on somewhat insecure ground, given the problematic and sparse evidence for many points. But enough is now known, in particular about the broader context within which Ibn Ṭufayl worked, to make a case for reinterpretation of the evidence on this central question.

*Gauthier on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*

We may begin with Léon Gauthier, the leading researcher on Ibn Ṭufayl in the early twentieth century and the author of the definitive edition of the Arabic text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Challenging two and a half centuries of assumptions that the primary aim of the work was to assert the possibility of the transcendent ascent of the inquiring rational soul of the *philosophus autodidactus*, he maintained that the primary concern of Ibn Ṭufayl was to demonstrate the harmony of religion and philosophy. The last parts of the book, in which Ḥayy meets Absāl, discovers the agreement of their respective views, and then goes with him to teach the people on the island of Salāmān, had been unjustly neglected, he argued. In all of Arabic literature, one could not find a work more admirably written than *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*: there are no superfluous details, faults of plan, or digressions, and the logic of the work is impeccable, with each part preparing the way for what follows. Hence, the concluding section, where the harmony of religion and philosophy is discussed, cannot be an irrelevant prolongation of the narrative, an “épisode parasite” with no logical connection with the principal aim of the book. Indeed, in view of the text’s compelling logical and narrative structure, these final parts must be seen as articulating the goal of the entire work. And as the concluding sections assert the agreement of religion and philosophy, this is clearly the “objet essentiel” of the book, which comes as no surprise since the very same point was the most important concern of medieval Islamic philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

This interpretation was queried by García Gómez some years later, but his doubts were not formulated as cogent arguments against Gauthier’s

<sup>8</sup>Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, pp. 65–66, 89–92.

position.<sup>9</sup> The latter accordingly brushed aside his colleague's objections on this and other points concerning Ibn Ṭufayl, and to the end of his life continued to uphold his view of the primary aim of the text.<sup>10</sup> And indeed, it has not failed to find support in more recent scholarship. His argument has received influential support from González Palencia, the Spanish translator of the text;<sup>11</sup> several studies of Islamic thought assert this view,<sup>12</sup> and in his history of Islamic Spain Watt comes close to Gauthier's position in stating that the book "clearly refers in the first place to the contemporary problems of the relation between philosophy and religion."<sup>13</sup>

Hourani's important study, however, has drawn attention to a number of serious weaknesses in Gauthier's argument. First, to assert as axiomatic the perfect logical construction of any book begs a very important question. The merits of a work in this respect comprise a conclusion that requires proof, not a premise with which one may begin. Similarly, while one might concede that Ibn Ṭufayl's essay contains only what is necessary to sustain and establish its argument, it does not follow that the concluding portion of the book must therefore bear a main message to which all previous discussion necessarily leads. And while the agreement of religion and philosophy may have been the most important subject in Islamic philosophy, this comprises no proof that the same concern was the principal subject of Ibn Ṭufayl. Indeed, Hourani argued, in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* the agreement of religion and philosophy receives only slight attention compared to that devoted to the ascent of the inquiring soul, and the assertions on the former point are nowhere explained or their truth argued. Opportunities to draw comparisons and to promote such an argument in a consistent fashion, as was done later by Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198) in his *Faṣl al-maqāl*, are consistently missed, and the lack of any preparation for the introduction of Absāl and Salāmān is so complete that one could almost prune these sections out of the text without sensing any loss from the argument.<sup>14</sup>

While this view cannot be accepted in its entirety, as we shall see below, it does make a strong case against Gauthier's interpretation of the text.

<sup>9</sup>Emilio García Gómez, "Un cuento árabe, fuente común de Abentofáil y de Gracián," *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos*, 30 (1926), p. 27.

<sup>10</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, vii-xxii; Léon Gauthier, *Ibn Rochd* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948), pp. 19-20.

<sup>11</sup>Ángel González Palencia, *Ibn Ṭufayl: El filósofo autodidacto*, 2nd edition (Madrid: Ediciones Jura, 1948), pp. 20-31.

<sup>12</sup>E.g. Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 393; Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 296, 301-302; A.G. Chejne, *Ibn Hazm* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982), p. 17.

<sup>13</sup>W. Montgomery Watt, *A History of Islamic Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965), p. 139. Cf. also 'Abdurrahmān Badawi, *Histoire de la philosophie en Islam* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1972), II, 735.

<sup>14</sup>Hourani, "The Principal Subject of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," pp. 40-46.

And to these objections may be added others that further argue against Gauthier's position. First, it is not true that "tout s'y enchaîne avec une logique impeccable,"<sup>15</sup> for in several places the text poses anomalies or contradictions. Shortly after relating the two stories of Ḥayy's origins, for example, Ibn Ṭufayl assures the security of the infant and the surrogate mother-gazelle by specifying that there were "no aggressive beasts of prey" on the island.<sup>16</sup> Later, however, the exercise of his Second Emulation includes coming to the rescue "whenever his eye caught sight of an animal that had been brought down by a beast of prey."<sup>17</sup> The reference to how the gazelle laid the infant Ḥayy among the feathers of his ark confirms the story of the child's human origin and contradicts the account of his spontaneous generation,<sup>18</sup> though both previously and subsequently an effort is made to formulate the two options as equally valid.<sup>19</sup> One of the book's absolutely fundamental propositions is that of Ḥayy's development in complete isolation from human contact or even awareness of human society; yet in identifying the First Emulation he regrets the demand his body makes of him for "various kinds of sensory fulfillment" that include, along with food and drink, sexual cohabitation (*al-mankūh*).<sup>20</sup> One of Ibn Ṭufayl's main criticisms of al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) is the latter's argument that "the souls of the wicked... waste away and pass into oblivion" after death, only the immaculate souls of the righteous achieving eternal felicity.<sup>21</sup> But this is precisely Ḥayy's own view when he concludes that after death the souls of "all inarticulate beasts" that have never known the Necessary Being, "whether they are in human form or not," are obliterated along with their bodies.<sup>22</sup> The reference to "the human form" (*ṣūrat al-insān*) is in any case premature: it is only later that Ḥayy identifies himself as "a species (*naw'*) distinct from all other species of animals," and much later, upon his meeting with Absāl, "another of his own form" (*'alā ṣūratihī*), that he discovers that the category of *al-insān* consists of more than himself.<sup>23</sup> Later, his commitment to the formal requirements of Absāl's religion raises some

<sup>15</sup>Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail*, p. 65. Cf. also Sami S. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism: a Philosophic Study of Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy bin Yaqzān* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), pp. 30–31: "The book contains no knots, no enigmas and no puzzles."

<sup>16</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34. Cf. Hillel G. Fradkin, "The Political Thought of Ibn Ṭufayl," in *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi*, edited by Charles E. Butterworth (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 253.

<sup>19</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 24, 33, 136.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95. Cf. the discussion of this point in Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 52–56.

<sup>23</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 104, 139–40.

awkward problems. Hayy is already fasting in a most rigorous fashion, so the commitment to *ṣiyām* is superfluous; he has no money or possessions from which to pay *zakāt*; how shall he perform the *ḥajj* from a deserted island where ships never stop?<sup>24</sup>

More importantly, our author offers conflicting accounts of his immediate motive for writing *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*. In the famous opening, he begins (in what may be recourse to a common rhetorical device) by addressing an unnamed colleague: "O noble brother, sincere devoted friend—may God grant you eternal life and everlasting felicity, you have asked me to spread forth before you whatever I can of the secrets of the Oriental Philosophy propounded by the Elder, the Master Abū 'Alī Ibn Sīnā."<sup>25</sup> He then continues to explain that now that he has had a brief experience (*dhawq*, literally "taste") of the Truth through direct intuitive vision (*bi-l-mushāhada*), he feels ready to commit to writing an exposition fit to be transmitted in his name and quoted on his authority. As the addressee is a true and sincere friend, he will be the first to whom Ibn Ṭufayl will entrust and articulate what he now knows.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the story, however, a completely different explanation is introduced: the righteous forefathers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, i.e. the genuinely qualified philosophers of times past) who had spoken only sparingly of esoteric mystical matters have now given way to pseudo-philosophers who are spreading corrupt ideas far and wide among those unfit to receive such views. Ibn Ṭufayl has thus set out to correct the situation.<sup>27</sup>

Second, there are specific indications in the book that demonstrate that the harmony of religion and philosophy is not a proposition that Ibn Ṭufayl would have conceded in such a simplistic form, much less made the primary theme of *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*. This is a critical point that bears further elaboration, since al-Marrākushī (wr. 621/1224), our most well-informed authority on our author, suggests the contrary, reporting that Ibn Ṭufayl

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145–46.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4. It has long been argued whether the text here should be read *al-mashriqīya*, "Oriental," or *al-mushriqīya*, "Illuminative." The nature of the philosophy to which Ibn Ṭufayl refers is of course important; but the quarrel is pointless since, as C.A. Nallino long ago observed, the alternative *al-mushriqīya* is an impossible form in Arabic; see his "Filosofia 'orientale' od 'illuminativa' d'Avicenna," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, 10 (1923–25), pp. 449–52, and esp. p. 452: "La lettura *mušriqī* e la sua traduzione 'relativa all'*išrāq*' sono dunque filologicamente da escludersi. . . ." See also Bernd Radtke, "Theosophie (Ḥikma) und Philosophie (Falsafa). Ein Beitrag zur Frage der *Ḥikmat al-mašriq/al-išrāq*," *Asiatische Studien*, 42 (1988), pp. 156–74. In any case, the two would basically amount to the same thing. See Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, p. 11 n. 3; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, revised edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), pp. 185–86.

<sup>26</sup> *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155–56. This passage will be considered in greater detail below, pp. 253–56.

was "anxious to reconcile philosophy (*al-ḥikma*) and the Sacred Law (*al-sharī'a*)."<sup>28</sup>

The relation between religion and philosophy is a subject that is introduced late in the story with the appearance of Absāl and Salāmān, both of whom are exponents of traditional revealed religion. Ḥayy has encounters with these two men that, while instructive and important in both cases, are nevertheless radically different in essence and outcome. As Ibn Ṭufayl explicitly states, Absāl is "the one of the two more anxious to delve into esoteric concerns (*al-bāṭin*), more inclined to discover the mystical dimensions of things (*al-ma'ānī al-rūḥānīya*), and more attracted to allegorical interpretation (*al-ta'wīl*)... a man by nature given to constant cogitation, incessant reflection, and searching for deeper meanings."<sup>29</sup> He is prepared to bring the fruits of rational speculation (*al-ma'qūl*) to bear on matters already addressed by doctrines handed down on past authority (*al-manqūl*), but prior to meeting Ḥayy he was still struggling with unsolved problems and obscure difficulties.<sup>30</sup> In an Islamic context, this is as much as to say that Absāl is the archetype of the rationalist dedicated to speculative theology, a *mutakallim*. In his case the encounter with Ḥayy is an overwhelming experience of dramatic fulfillment, but if one wishes to see this as engendering some sort of harmony it is harmony of an entirely one-sided kind. It is Ḥayy who has illuminated Absāl. The latter now sees his problems and difficulties vanish and realizes that "all those things found in his religion (*sharī'atihi*) concerning God, His angels, scriptures, and prophets, the Last Day, and His Heaven and Hell, were symbols (*amthila*) of that which Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān knew through direct intuitive experience." He venerates Ḥayy as a saint (*waliy*) and decides to become his disciple and to follow his example.<sup>31</sup> Ḥayy, on the other hand, believes in Absāl's prophet, bears witness to that prophet's divine mission, finds in Absāl's religion "nothing that contradicted that which he had personally experienced in his exalted station," and even undertakes, as mentioned above, to pray, pay the *zakāt*, fast, and perform the pilgrimage.<sup>32</sup> But by these professions and commitments he gains nothing in spiritual terms. In other words, if harmony is achieved between the rational theologian and the philosopher-mystic, it is only because the former is inspired by or proceeds onward to the latter's more sublime level. One cannot say, then, that "Ḥayy and Absāl find out that the way of philosophy as pursued by Ḥayy and the formal religion

<sup>28</sup> Al-Marrākushī, *Al-Mu'jib fī talkhīṣ akhbār al-Maghrib*, edited by R.P.A. Dozy, 2nd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1881), p. 172.

<sup>29</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 136–37.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144–45.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145–46.



taught to Absāl are merely forms of the same eternal truth,"<sup>33</sup> for it is only Absāl who finds his system wanting. Ḥayy's commitment to his own discoveries, on the other hand, remains as firm as ever; he simply adds to them a determination to act on his knowledge and teach it to others. When this program fails, he returns to his island, followed—significantly—by Absāl.

The encounter with Salāmān stands in distinct contrast to this. The ruler of the nearby island was "more anxious to uphold the literal sense of things (*al-ẓāhir*) and to avoid allegorical interpretation, and abstained from independent thinking and speculation (*al-taṣarruf wa-l-ta'ammul*):" he was "by nature fearful of cogitation and independent thinking; hence, in his view, adhering to society was one way to ward off Satan-inspired delusions (*al-waswās*), dispel objectionable ideas, and protect oneself against fiendish temptations (*hamazāt al-shayāṭīn*)."<sup>34</sup> There can be little doubt that Salāmān represents the popular level of revealed religion, the conservative tradition represented in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in Ibn Ṭufayl's day by those Mālikī *fuqahā'* who, though working within a Muwahḥid framework, championed a literalist vision of Islam. Just from his conversations with Absāl, Ḥayy can already note what from his perspective amount to serious deficiencies in the religious tradition that Salāmān represents—it allows the faithful to content themselves with only deceptive symbols (*amthāl*) of the Truth and to distract themselves in the pursuit of the world's trivia and vanities.<sup>35</sup> He resolves to go to save these people, but Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that he does so only because "he did not know how stupid, deficient, misguided, and weak-willed they were, like wandering sheep, nay—even further astray from the path."<sup>36</sup> Even Absāl sees hope for success only with respect to "a group of his aspiring friends who were closer than the others to deliverance (*al-takhalluṣ*)."<sup>37</sup>

The enterprise is of course a failure. Ḥayy may concede that formal religion is suited to the needs of Salāmān's people, but in the end he despairs of saving any of them, even the select circle of Absāl's friends, and abandons all hope that they will accept what he says. He finally apologizes to Salāmān and his companions for what he had discussed with them, disavows his earlier position and upholds theirs, and urges them to cling steadfast to the most literal level of religion. He and Absāl then "surreptitiously" (*tahaman*) take passage back to their island.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Anwar G. Chejne, *Muslim Spain: Its History and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974), p. 326.

<sup>34</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*., p. 137.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147. For the Qur'ānic simile, see Sūrat al-Furqān (25), vs. 44.

<sup>37</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, pp. 148, 149.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149–54.

From this it is clear that where the relation of religion and philosophy is concerned, Ibn Ṭufayl is arguing a point far more exact than, and ultimately quite different from, that of their harmony. In some cases it may be possible for the *mutakallim*, having through reason already moved on to the more esoteric dimensions of religion, and now inspired and guided by the philosopher-mystic, to ascend to the latter's level of knowledge. For those unable or unwilling to transcend the literal content of religion, however, such a level is both unattainable and unintelligible. To the extent that "harmony" is asserted it amounts only to this secondary point: as the philosopher-mystic's understanding and knowledge transcend the symbolic representations of revealed religion, he comes to find the latter superficial, compromised, and unfulfilling, but is not obliged to repudiate it in essentials or to deny its relevance to the needs of the common man.

Lastly, a few words must be said about the weakly formulated and unsubstantiated manner in which Gauthier sets forth his argument, a feature rightly noted by Hourani and one that seems rather curious coming from a learned editor and translator who devoted much of his career to the word-by-word examination of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. The explanation for this lies not in Gauthier's analysis of the text *per se*, but rather in the preconceptions he brought to its study. This is made quite clear by an introduction to the study of Islamic philosophy that Gauthier published in 1923 under the auspices of the *Revue du monde musulman*.<sup>39</sup> In this work he pursues the race-oriented formulations of Renan and argues that the spirit of the Aryan race and that of the Semitic race stand in diametrical opposition to one another, a relationship of confrontation that can be seen in even the slightest details of culture and everyday life. Semites even drink coffee before their meal, for example, and several pages are engulfed by Gauthier's reflections on the secrets of the Semitic spirit that may be discerned in the philosophical implications of couscous.<sup>40</sup> On the foundation of this Aryan/Semitic dichotomy is raised an edifice elaborating a Semitic character that essentially amounts to the negation of the positive attributes of the Aryan character: Aryans build for the future while Semites yearn for the past, and so on through paradigms of order/chaos, democracy/despotism, thought/passion, complexity/simplicity, moderation/fanaticism, analysis/wonder, investigation/belief, reason/dogma, etc. In particular, the Aryan genius culminates in philosophy, the Semitic in monotheistic religion. But while Christianity was very early on tempered by philosophical influences, Islam remained more purely Semitic;

<sup>39</sup> Léon Gauthier, *Introduction à l'étude de la philosophie musulmane: l'esprit sémitique et l'esprit aryen, la philosophie grecque et la religion de l'Islâm* (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1923).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37–42.

hence it is "impossible de concevoir un système religieux plus opposé à la philosophie grecque." Likewise, it is precisely because Greek philosophy and Islam are such "contraires" that the reconciliation of the two is the paramount task of Islamic philosophy.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, Gauthier's case for the primary concern of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* springs not from dispassionate study of the text, but from the ethnocentric agenda that encumbered so much of traditional Orientalism. In conceptualization as well as in specific content, then, Gauthier's argument must be set aside. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that his contribution was an important one. Prior to his time the essential aim of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* had been taken for granted and never discussed in any meaningful way. The case set forth by Gauthier demonstrated that a crucial point was being ignored, and that parts of the text that lay outside the strictly philosophical argument were potentially critical to the assessment of the work as a whole.

### *The Case for the Philosophus Autodidactus*

The argument against Gauthier leads Hourani to propose a more plausible alternative. His attention is consistently drawn to the section of the text relating Ḥayy's progress from the most elementary knowledge to the highest mystical state.<sup>42</sup> This part occupies three fourths of the book, is "argued step by step," and follows up on the "trend of the argument" prepared for in the Introduction. The later section on Ḥayy's experiences with Absāl and Salāmān, on the other hand, receives much less attention in terms of space, and assertions on the harmony of religion and philosophy are nowhere explained or their truth argued. As mentioned above, Hourani suggests that this could all be pruned out of the text without missing any of the argument. The concluding section on Absāl and Salāmān is in essence an anticlimax after Ḥayy's vision of the Necessary Being; and while it would be erroneous to dismiss this part of the book as superfluous, it is nevertheless "exterior" to the main argument. Its purpose is merely preliminary and it asserts what every medieval Muslim philosopher had to assert: that his philosophizing was not un-Islamic and that revealed religion fulfilled a necessary function in a society that consisted not of saints and philosophers, but ordinary men and women.<sup>43</sup>

Hence, as Hourani puts it, we are for all intents and purposes back to the *philosophus autodidactus* and the possibility of the soul's unaided assent, a theme that reflects "one of the leading features in the scale of values of

<sup>41</sup>Gauthier, *Introduction*, p. 121.

<sup>42</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 20–136.

<sup>43</sup>Hourani, "The Principal Subject of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," pp. 42–46.

Greek and Arabic philosophers alike: the conviction that the care of his own soul is more important to a philosopher than any other subject, even the relation of philosophy to religion or the place of religion in society."<sup>44</sup> With this more recent scholarship seems to be in agreement. In his English translation of the text, Lenn Goodman states that Hourani's argument "seems certainly to be a valid analysis;"<sup>45</sup> or more specifically:

The writing of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* seems to have been, in large measure, Ibn Ṭufayl's response to the challenge of Avicenna's thought experiment, a response which would construct a fuller thought experiment which would allow man to contemplate himself as truly in a vacuum as was possible.<sup>46</sup>

And Hawi pursues the point even further in arguing that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is a specifically philosophical treatise, rather than a symbolic romance.<sup>47</sup>

Hourani's case is carefully and articulately argued, but it too poses several problems. First, the factors of proportion and "density" of argument may show that viewed in terms of space consumed the ascent of the aspiring soul is indeed the "principal subject" of the book, the concern Hourani announces in the title of his article. But such simple mechanical considerations do not demonstrate that this same subject was an end unto itself, i.e. that it was the primary aim of Ibn Ṭufayl, which was the problem of particular interest to Gauthier. And although Hourani is quite right in noting the weakness of the argument for the harmony of religion and philosophy and the "exterior" character of this theme, what he identifies here are but structural manifestations of the point argued above: the harmony of religion and philosophy is simply not an issue in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.<sup>48</sup> It is for this reason fallacious to argue, as he does, that since this theme is "exterior" to the primary concern of the book, the section on Absāl and Salāmān is therefore "exterior" to this concern.

This brings us to perhaps the most problematic aspect of Hourani's analysis: the argument that after Ḥayy's vision of the Necessary Being all else is an anticlimax, a relaxation or release of tension, and that the exposure

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> Lenn Evan Goodman, *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān: a Philosophical Tale* (New York: Twayne, 1972), pp. 47–48.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>47</sup> Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 25–31, 48–50, 183–86.

<sup>48</sup> The confusion between "principal subject" and "primary object" (Gauthier's "objet essentiel," "le but") is revealed most clearly in Hourani's *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* (London: Luzac, 1961), p. 6, where he states that "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* briefly asserted the harmony of *shar'* and *falsafa*, though this was not its primary purpose," and adds in a note: "L. Gauthier was mistaken in thinking that it was," referring for the proof of this to his article on the "principal subject."

to human society "helps him not at all in his major pursuit; the encounter is only a distraction from his exalted station."<sup>49</sup> But what is this "major pursuit"? Throughout the book Ḥayy's quest is, simply put, the Truth: he was "by nature disposed to seek out the truth about things (*ḥaqā'iq al-ashyā'*)."<sup>50</sup> His annihilation (*fanā'*) in awareness of the Necessary Being represents a level of mystical knowledge that will never be surpassed; but the sudden appearance of Absāl and Ḥayy's subsequent discovery of the existence of mankind raises a question for which he as yet has no answer: of what greater social relevance is the knowledge of those who know the Truth, and does possession of the Truth carry with it a burden of social responsibility? Ḥayy surely sees a new social dimension to his quest, for "as his solicitude for the people and his aspiration to become the instrument of their salvation increased, he resolved to go to them and to explain and clarify the Truth to them."<sup>51</sup> And it is difficult to believe that this dimension was "exterior" so far as Ibn Ṭufayl was concerned. The account of the ascent of the aspiring soul is, as Hourani notes, argued precisely and at great length. But it is also formulated on a mythic plane curiously (and in all likelihood deliberately) remote from readers who have never been washed up on beaches as infants, spontaneously generated out of mud, nurtured by gazelles, or quartered utterly alone in a cave on an uninhabited island for 43 years.<sup>52</sup> With the introduction of Absāl and Salāmān, this mythic ethos palpably gives way and the text immediately becomes, as we shall see, relevant to the social realities and questions confronting Muslim scholars and intellectuals in a Maghrib fraught with social, cultural, political, and religious tensions on numerous intersecting fronts: inter-tribal rivalries, Arab-Berber animosities, the intensifying struggle between formal religion and the popular trends of Ṣūfism and saint-worship, the confrontation of the old established Mālikīte school of jurisprudence and the official Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite doctrines espoused by the Muwaḥḥid movement and its founder Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130), and tensions between the entrenched elites and emergent more egalitarian interests.<sup>53</sup>

If the social dimension is not exterior to the main concern of the book, then obviously the ascent of the *philosophus autodidactus*, which ends before Ḥayy's social experiences begin, cannot be this main concern. And indeed, there are other indications arguing against the view that the primary point that Ibn Ṭufayl sought to communicate was the possibility of the ascent of the aspiring soul of the self-taught philosopher. First, it is

<sup>49</sup>Hourani, "The Principal Subject of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*," pp. 44-45.

<sup>50</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 140.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Fedwa Malti-Douglas' comments on this above, p. 53.

<sup>53</sup>On these tensions, see the discussion by Vincent Cornell, pp. 137-44 above.

worth observing that in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* direct Qur'ānic quotations do not occur randomly, but rather tend to concentrate in a few key passages, most particularly Ḥayy's vision of the Necessary Being<sup>54</sup> and the account of his disillusioning failure to win over the population of Absāl and Salāmān's island.<sup>55</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl would of course have expected an educated Muslim reader to recognize these quotations, and one must therefore assume that he concentrated them in these passages because he felt a particular need—here more so than elsewhere—to evoke such recognition. In light of the conservative audience that his text must have reached in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib, the most likely explanation is that in these two passages he sought to buttress important but controversial formulations with the authority of the Qur'ān. For present purposes, it is significant that this effort is just as prominent in the account of Ḥayy's failure on Absāl and Salāmān's island—indeed, perhaps more prominent—as it is in his description of the vision of the Necessary Being.

A second observation has to do with the structure of the text. The framework for the narrative is the division of Ḥayy's life into heptads (*asābī'*), a scheme which, as a practicing physician and a savant in philosophy,<sup>56</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl could have taken up from any of several Greek texts translated into Arabic in earlier Islamic times.<sup>57</sup> The seven-symbolism of this classical model would dictate that the culminating point of Ḥayy's life, its *akme*,<sup>58</sup> should occur close to the transition point between the seventh heptad and the eighth, i.e. at about the age of 49. In the text we find that the meeting with Absāl is specifically associated with this point; the vision of the Necessary Being, on the other hand, has occurred some considerable period of time earlier (since before meeting Absāl Ḥayy has after long practice become adept at maintaining his mystical state), and Ibn Ṭufayl does not even give the attainment of *fanā'* a firm anchor-point within the Lebensalter.<sup>59</sup>

Third, we would do well to look closely at Ibn Ṭufayl's assessment of the capacity of reason and the human intellect. Although Ibn Ṭufayl affirms

<sup>54</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 120–21.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150–53.

<sup>56</sup> See the Introduction, pp. 7–9 above.

<sup>57</sup> See Lutz Richter-Bernburg's account of this system above, pp. 109–13. Reliance on the Greek archetype seems clear in this case, but it is nonetheless important to note that in medieval Islamic times a more general symbolism of "seven" was also very prominent. See Lawrence I. Conrad, "Seven and the *Tasbī'*: On the Implications of Numerical Symbolism for the Study of Medieval Islamic History," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 31 (1988), pp. 42–73.

<sup>58</sup> On the concept of *akme*, see Rudolf Hirzel, "Über Rundzahlen," *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Classe*, 37 (1885), pp. 6–62, esp. pp. 7–14.

<sup>59</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 90, 135.

that through reason one can perceive what empirical observation can never discover—the Aristotelian forms of things and the existence of God,<sup>60</sup> he repeatedly asserts that the level of understanding of which he speaks lies beyond rational demonstration. As the encounters with Absāl and Salāmān indicate, it retains affinity with reason in that it does not require the repudiation of rationally derived conclusions, just as reason does not repudiate the literal content of religion. But similarly, just as reason passes beyond this literal content of religion, the level of knowledge addressed by Ibn Ṭufayl is a transcendent state of awareness to which access is not gained “through intellectual speculation based on syllogistic deduction, postulation of premises, and the drawing of inferences,” but rather only through *dhawq*, i.e. direct intuitive experience, in the same way that a blind man, regardless of how intensely he studies the subject of colors, could never be said to “know” them.<sup>61</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl readily acknowledges his debt to the classical and earlier Islamic philosophical traditions; but these traditions offer only a theoretical foundation which he has pursued to something more sublime, “this brief tasting of the Truth through direct intuitive experience.”<sup>62</sup> “If one takes literally everything elaborated in the works of Aristotle and in the *Kitāb al-shifāʾ*, without coming to an understanding of its secret and esoteric sense, then one will fall quite far short of the Truth.”<sup>63</sup> The results of this transcendent experience cannot be expressed to the uninitiated in the vocabulary of referents to the material world,<sup>64</sup> and Ibn Ṭufayl twice upbraids the reader who would query or challenge him in philosophical terms.<sup>65</sup> And as for Ḥayy, reason accompanies and guides him only to the point of enabling him to identify the Three Emulations that will lead him further to the knowledge he seeks. Thereafter, he is proceeding beyond the domain of reason’s competence.<sup>66</sup>

The question posed by such views is whether they amount to an implicit argument for the insufficiency of philosophy in general, and if so, to what extent Ḥayy is either *philosophus* or *autodidactus* by the time he reaches his ultimate mystical state. The immediate retort is of course that we have to do here with a Neoplatonist formulation of the kind so often found among the medieval Islamic *falāsifa*, and that the deficiencies noted by Ibn Ṭufayl are those of the Peripatetics, beyond which the illuminist philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and others can be pursued to more mystical dimensions.

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 83.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5–10.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 6, 10–11, 16, 121–22, 127, 134.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125–27, 132–33.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110–20.

Within such a framework Ibn Ṭufayl's account of Ḥayy's ascent remains philosophical to the end. Such has long been the assumption, but there is reason to suspect that the situation was not so simple.

With the field of philosophical studies traditionally despised and restricted in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib, works from the East often impossible to obtain, and academic contacts haphazard at best,<sup>67</sup> one might wonder how Andalusian philosophy was able to survive, much less produce such figures as Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), Ibn Bājja (d. 533/1139), and Ibn Rushd. Part of the answer seems to lie in the fact that elements of philosophical thinking were making their way into the Andalusian scene through other channels, and that philosophy itself was nourished and sustained by other better-established fields. Where Neoplatonism is concerned, its influence in Islam extended beyond the domains of philosophy, and traces of it can even be detected in statements attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>68</sup> In the specific case of al-Andalus and the western Maghrib, Neoplatonic thinking and other dialectical tools for metaphysical and specifically mystical speculation were introduced into the Andalusian intellectual milieu quite independently of any philosophical tradition. In the third/ninth century, when philosophy was still unknown in the region,<sup>69</sup> such elements had nevertheless risen to prominence through the medium of medical and scientific doctrine, the rationalist speculations of the Mu'tazila, and the rapidly expanding trends of Ṣūfism; indeed, it was upon these foundations that Andalusian and Maghribi philosophy arose.<sup>70</sup> As has been argued above,<sup>71</sup> all these were prominent among the interests of Ibn Ṭufayl and the influences evident in *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. And as several modern critics have observed, the fact that its author generally argues like a philosopher must be measured against the numerous anomalies evident in his text.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup>Cf. the Introduction above, pp. 9–16.

<sup>68</sup>See Ignaz Goldziher, "Neuplatonische und gnostische Elemente im *Ḥadūt*," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete*, 22 (1908), pp. 317–44; reprinted in his *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Joseph DeSomogyi (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1967–73), V, 107–34.

<sup>69</sup>Ṣā'id al-Andalusī (d. 462/1070) states that "after the triumph of the Umayyads (*taghallub banī Umayya*) there arose in al-Andalus a group [of scholars] interested in the pursuit of philosophy," but that in earlier times al-Andalus was "so devoid of learning that not a single one of its people had a reputation for any interest in it." See his *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, edited by Louis Cheikho in *Al-Mashriq*, 14 (1911), p. 851; also the useful discussion in Majid Fakhry, "Zuhūr al-falsafa fī l-Andalus," in his Introduction to Ibn Bājja, *Opera metaphysica*, pp. 11–13.

<sup>70</sup>See Miguel Asín Palacios, *Ibn Masarra y su escuela: orígenes de la filosofía hispano-musulmana*, in his *Obras escogidas* (Madrid: Escuelas de estudios árabes de Madrid y Granada, 1946–48), I, 21–37; Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 209–19.

<sup>71</sup>See above, pp. 7–9, 16–18, 24–31.

<sup>72</sup>See above, pp. 31–34.



Furthermore, it must be noted that Ḥayy's mystical reveries lead him not only to the transcendent vision of the divine, but also to the blasphemy of identifying himself with God.<sup>73</sup> Only direct divine intervention at this point saves him from what was the gravest accusation levelled against the mystics. It is not likely that this is introduced as a propitiatory gesture to the literalists, for the repudiation of Ṣūfī excesses in the Introduction obviates any need to do so again—the intentionality of the text must once again be borne in mind.<sup>74</sup> In this connection we may observe that the active agency of the divine has already been adduced in Ḥayy's observation of the fighting crows,<sup>75</sup> which is based on the Qur'ānic account of how God sent a crow to teach Cain to bury the body of his brother Abel.<sup>76</sup> Later, it is again evoked when God sends Ḥayy and Absāl a ship to take them to Salāmān's island,<sup>77</sup> and then facilitates their return to Ḥayy's island.<sup>78</sup> As before, this is unnecessary if the author has no specific point in mind, for Ḥayy could easily have been made to realize the necessity of burying the gazelle without recourse to Qur'ānic imagery, and ships could have been provided through the same sort of fortuitous incident that, for example, introduces Ḥayy to fire.<sup>79</sup> The direct intervention of the Necessary Being to save an errant soul is in fact only one of numerous anomalies that arise if one insists on a strict interpretation of the text in terms of Neoplatonic philosophy, as opposed to a melange of Neoplatonic elements coming to Ibn Ṭufayl from a variety of cultural sources,<sup>80</sup> all of which were deeply rooted and well-established in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib and well-known to our author.

### *Ibn Ṭufayl and the Problem of Communication*

If Ibn Ṭufayl's primary goal in writing Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān was neither to assert the harmony of religion and philosophy nor to argue for the possibility of the ascent of the aspiring soul of the *philosophus autodidactus*, what then might his aim have been? This question immediately raises several others: in the first instance, that of the particular problem being addressed. This problem is in fact explicitly stated. Ibn Ṭufayl says that he has pursued the thought of al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā on to a level of mystical experience that transcends empirical investigation and discursive reasoning (*al-baḥṭh*

<sup>73</sup> Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, p. 124.

<sup>74</sup> See above, pp. 36–37.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the comments by Fedwa Malti-Douglas above, p. 63.

<sup>76</sup> Sūrat al-Mā'ida (5), vss. 27–31.

<sup>77</sup> Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, p. 148. The ship is sent "at God's command" (*min amr Allāh*).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> See Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 79, 148, 150, 161, 213.

*wa-l-naẓar*), and that in the course of his quest he has had the opportunity to draw comparisons with "the views that have emerged in this our own time, ideas to which a group of those who presume to study philosophy are fervently dedicated."<sup>81</sup> As we may now well imagine from the generally precarious state of philosophy in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib, Ibn Ṭufayl found considerable cause for alarm in the activities of these self-styled philosophers:

This then—may God grant you inspiration to sustain you—is all there is to say of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān, Absāl, and Salāmān. It pursues a line of discourse not to be found in books and not to be heard in speeches of the customary kind; and it proffers a concealed sort of knowledge that can only be perceived by those with a direct awareness (*ma'rifa*) of God, but that will only pass unnoticed by those deluded individuals who know Him not. In proceeding in this manner we have diverged from our righteous forefathers' practice of withholding such knowledge and speaking of it only sparingly. But what made it easy for us to disclose this secret and to tear aside the veil is the way the current generation of pseudo-philosophers is giving prominence and publicity to corrupt opinions, this to such an extent that these views have spread from country to country and caused harm everywhere.<sup>82</sup>

There would seem to be no reason to doubt that this is the problem that compelled Ibn Ṭufayl to write.<sup>83</sup> It was an exceedingly common rhetorical device in medieval Arabic literature to begin one's book or essay by addressing an unnamed colleague who has reputedly asked a question or raised a point for discussion. But even if there is some factual basis for references at the beginning of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* to the entreaties of a friend for clarification of the Oriental Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (could Ibn Ṭufayl have been addressing his young colleague Ibn Rushd, or—if less likely—his patron the caliph?), these queries would only have provided the immediate occasion for dealing with a problem that had been troubling Ibn Ṭufayl for some time. Based on a composition date of sometime between 573/1177 and 578/1182,<sup>84</sup> his work must have been written only a few years before his death, when he was already more than 60 years old.

<sup>81</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, p. 18.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>83</sup> Similar problems are cited by other Andalusian and Maghribi thinkers as their motives for writing. See Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Taqrīb li-ḥadd al-mantiq wa-l-madkhal ilayhi*, edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār maktabat al-ḥayāt, 1959), pp. 6–7; Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, edited by George F. Hourani (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> See the Introduction above, p. 7.

Ibn Ṭufayl himself specifies what in particular bothered him about the abuse of philosophy in his own day, and what he had done about it in his "project." The passage quoted above continues as follows:

This made us fearful that the feeble-minded individuals (*al-du'afa'*) who repudiate adherence (*taqlīd*) to the prophets and wish to embrace the authority of fools, will come to the erroneous conclusion that such views are the secrets hidden from all but those fit to know them, thereby compounding their infatuation and craving for these ideas. We have therefore decided to grant them an elusive hint at one part of the secret of secrets, that we might draw them onto the path to discovery of the Truth and divert them from that other path. In any case, we have not left these secrets set forth in these few short pages without a thin veil, one quickly torn aside by him who deserves to do so, but which becomes so thick before the man unworthy of passing beyond it that he will never be able to step past it.<sup>85</sup>

As the author clearly states, the most disturbing aspect of the problem is that incompetent and irresponsible publicizers are not only spreading corrupt ideas, they are spreading them among people who are not capable of understanding such matters. These people then set aside their former adherence to the traditional authority of revealed religion to follow charlatans who can give them nothing to replace it. This was a problem central to the concerns of many medieval Islamic thinkers. People are possessed of varying capacities to understand and make profitable use of different kinds of knowledge; and for the sake of preserving social and political order, the integrity of religion, and the safety of one's own soul, an individual should not delve into those esoteric dimensions of religion beyond his ability to discriminate between sublime truth on the one hand and heresy and irredeemable blasphemy on the other. To borrow a metaphor from al-Ghazālī, to challenge a literal adherent to religion to abandon his unquestioning belief and to confront religious problems is to shatter the glass of his sense of security in his faith with the element of doubt and spiritual restlessness. When this happens, the believer cannot simply pick up the pieces, glue them together, and pretend that the glass is the same integral whole that it was before; he must melt down the fragments and reblow the glass anew. He must deal with his doubts and proceed on to a more demonstrably secure level of belief.<sup>86</sup> But if an individual is unable to cope with

<sup>85</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 155–56.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, edited and translated by Richard Joseph McCarthy in his *Freedom and Fulfillment* (Boston: Twayne, 1980), p. 67.

these questions, or is led astray by erroneous speculation, then his soul is in mortal peril and both he and the one who led him on are guilty of disbelief (*kufṛ*). This was how Ibn Rushd saw the question,<sup>87</sup> and Ibn Ṭufayl's view was probably very similar. He was quite familiar with the *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, the work in which al-Ghazālī elaborates the "shattered glass" metaphor, and cites it by name.<sup>88</sup> His approval on this point would seem implicit in the frequent use he makes of al-Ghazālī's book, and especially in his own allusion to the metaphor of the "shattered glass" with reference to the circle of Absāl's friends:

He and his companion Absāl knew that this group of aspiring but deficient individuals would never find salvation except by this means (i.e. through literal adherence to revealed religion), and that even if they were raised beyond it to loftier vistas of reflection, their present mode of belief would be thrown into disarray without enabling them to attain the level of those who have achieved felicity. They would vacillate and fall back, with consequences most dire; while if they remained in their present mode of belief until they died, they would assuredly triumph secure and stand among the Companions of the Right (i.e. in Paradise).<sup>89</sup>

It is here that we reach to the heart of the matter. The possibility that some small minority of aspiring philosopher-mystics may ascend to knowledge of transcendent truth is not itself the primary object of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*; it simply raises the primary problem. That is, is it not paradoxical to uphold the pursuit of transcendent mystical truth as essential in philosophical terms and, as Ibn Rushd argued, obligatory in terms of Islamic law,<sup>90</sup> when communication of this Truth implies the salvation of the few at the cost of the perdition of the majority? Or to phrase the same question in a more positive form: how can the most central concerns of the esoteric disciplines be pursued and discussed among those qualified to do so, and at the same time be withheld from those whom such knowledge would harm?

One answer—the one most commonly encountered in medieval Islamic thought—was simply that since the esoteric concerns of religion must be withheld from the masses, the elite few should write in deliberately enigmatic terms that would be clear to themselves but impenetrable by the

<sup>87</sup> Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, pp. 22, 34.

<sup>88</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 15–16. Concerning his assessment of al-Ghazālī in his Introduction, see Cruz Hernandez, *Filosofía hispano-musulmana*, I, 382–85; Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 60–68.

<sup>89</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, p. 154.

<sup>90</sup> See Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, pp. 5–13.

unworthy majority.<sup>91</sup> Hawi applies this to *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* and argues that Ibn Ṭufayl's method of concealment, his "thin veil," consists of a discourse that proceeds in two registers simultaneously: there is a literal level intended to mollify the adherents of literal belief and conformity to received dogma, and beyond the thin veil, a philosophical level that conveys his true intentions.<sup>92</sup> But this is for several reasons impossible. First, such an interpretation utterly negates the social dimension of the text. Just as Ḥayy goes to Absāl's island not to illuminate philosophers, but to save the people in general, so Ibn Ṭufayl tells us that he has written his book because so many individuals incapable of comprehending philosophy or recognizing specious arguments are being tempted to challenge their literal faith. To such persons a discourse in two registers—a literal level they already know and a philosophical level deliberately articulated beyond their powers of comprehension—serves no useful purpose whatever, and if anything, will simply exacerbate the already existing problem. Second, a simplistic literal religion/esoteric philosophy dichotomy would seem to accord with neither epistemological nor social realities. Aside from such axiomatic statements as "Ten is more than three," to borrow another of al-Ghazālī's formulations, arguments and propositions about metaphysical and spiritual questions must inevitably comprise a minutely differentiated and varied continuum dictated as much by the individual contemplating these matters as by the intrinsic nature of the discussion itself. That is, what is quite opaque to one person might be perfectly obvious to another.

As this observation suggests, how can criteria be set for defining who is worthy to study esoteric questions? The common folk—the rural peasantry and the poor and uneducated urban working classes—can of course be excluded automatically. But as Ibn Ṭufayl makes abundantly clear from Ḥayy and Absāl's troubled sojourn on the island of Salāmān, the category of those who are unsuited to delve into such questions becomes quite problematic with respect to the educated elite represented by Absāl's circle of "aspiring" friends in the story and by the "pseudo-philosophers" in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in Ibn Ṭufayl's time. Such persons all consider themselves qualified to discuss philosophical and mystical topics, and in some cases even to teach and to circulate their own ideas, but in fact all serve only to spread corruption and confusion.

In Ibn Ṭufayl's case, the complexity and variety of his audience is made even clearer by developments that had transpired in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib by his times, and by our author's own public career and

<sup>91</sup> See Hourani, *Averroes*, pp. 106–107, 114, for a valuable summary of the classical and earlier Islamic formulations on this theme that would have been available in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in the time of Ibn Ṭufayl and Ibn Rushd.

<sup>92</sup> Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism*, pp. 23, 36–43, 104, 148, 149, 227, 229.

his position at the Muwaḥḥid court. As discussed elsewhere, he served as a propagandist and played an important and highly visible role at the court in Marrakesh, probably in an eminent position among the *ṭalaba*.<sup>93</sup>

The interest of the caliphs in the discussion of scholarly questions at the court is also to be noted, and is probably to be viewed as yet another manifestation of the pedagogical dimension of the Muwaḥḥid movement.<sup>94</sup> In public audiences the social and intellectual diversity of the Muwaḥḥid elite must have been in clear evidence, including both Berber notables and personalities from the distinguished Arab families, conservative Mālikī *fuqahā'* and Ash'arite theologians, zealous but only slightly trained missionaries and highly educated men of science and letters, administrators and scholars. A figure as highly visible as Ibn Ṭufayl would have been involved in discussions obliging him to communicate not to a select circle of philosophers, but to large audiences of diverse intellectual capacities and interests.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, it was probably here that he found the "pseudo-philosophers" most vocal, and to this sort of audience that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* was addressed.

### *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān and the Socialization of Knowledge*

Any text, and perhaps this one more than many others, represents a social act in that it seeks to communicate to an audience and must take the nature of this audience into consideration if the communication is to achieve its purpose. And as we have seen, the problem Ibn Ṭufayl seeks to address and the socio-intellectual milieu within which he had to express himself together obliged him to communicate to an audience representing not solely uncompromising literalists and recondite philosophers, but a broad continuum of interests, convictions, and intellectual abilities. His book must therefore be seen as operative at all of these levels. That is, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* is an attempt at what one might call the "socialization of knowledge."<sup>96</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl anticipated that he would be read from different perspectives and approached at different levels, and so sought to set forth a text that conveys a range of meaning suited to the accommodation of this broad audience. No matter how a reader comes to the text, it communicates to him what Ibn Ṭufayl deems to be an appropriate message and challenges him to pass beyond the "thin veil" to discern a more profound significance. The question of a "literal" and "esoteric" meaning in fact does not arise, for the text

<sup>93</sup>See n. 2 above.

<sup>94</sup>See Conrad, "Andalusian Physician," pp. 8–10. Cf. also the Introduction above, pp. 19–22.

<sup>95</sup>See, again, Vincent Cornell's discussion, pp. 137–44 above.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. Lawrence I. Conrad, "Scholarship and Social Context: a Medical Case from the Eleventh-Century Near East," in *Knowledge and the Scholarly Medical Traditions*, edited by Don Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 84–100.

confronts its audience with many "literal" messages, and a host of "thin veils."

The modern researcher is thus confronted with both rich prospects and formidable problems. On the one hand, efforts to delve into the book to extract levels of meaning could proceed indefinitely, and might conceivably be conceded equal validity—depending, of course, on the validity of their relation to their specific terms of reference. On the other, the process of socialization proposed above must clearly mean that changes in the terms of reference involve commensurate changes in perceived meaning. It thus becomes extremely difficult to relate differing perspectives and potential readings to one another, and in particular, to seek some "ultimate" meaning—its meaning to Ibn Ṭufayl himself—without expanding one's inquiry beyond the text of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. The examples to follow, many of which have already been considered in other contexts above, thus may be taken as illustrative, but by no means exhaustive of the message and meaning that the book might have conveyed to a Muslim audience in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib in the time of the Muwaḥḥids.

At the most literal level, we can note that the reader is from the first encouraged to continue by a host of familiar themes and images. Although his development of the characters is entirely original, Ibn Ṭufayl was not the first writer to build a narrative around the figures of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, Absāl, and Salāmān. As discussed above,<sup>97</sup> numerous motifs can be traced to earlier tales in circulation in Ibn Ṭufayl's time. The general reader would also find his course through the essay facilitated by the structural feature of the heptads. The division of the human lifespan into schematic sections based on a fixed number of years was a common theme in medieval Islamic discussions of maturation and aging, and the classical heptads in particular were well known in non-medical circles.<sup>98</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl's announcement of a new *usbū'* thus serves as a reinforcing signal that an important transition is being made: at the age of seven—from survival to mastery of the environment, 21—empiricism to rationalism, 28—contemplation of the translunar rather than the sublunar world, 35—transition from proof of the Necessary Being to discovery of the soul, 49—socialization of Ḥayy: the encounter with Absāl and Salāmān.<sup>99</sup> That these structural features (other than that of 49, which stands on its own as the *akme*) are adduced to serve as aids to comprehension rather than as integral steps in a formal argument is the conclusion suggested by the author's acquiescence in the discontinuity that

<sup>97</sup> See pp. 25, 32 above.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), *Murūj al-dhahab*, edited by Charles Pellat (Beirut: Université Libanaise, 1966–79), II, 374; al-Qālī (d. 356/967), *Kitāb al-amālī* (Cairo: Lajnat al-ta'līf wa-l-tarjama wa-l-nashr, 1344/1926), I, 61.

<sup>99</sup> *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 36, 37, 52–53, 55, 75, 90, 135.

arises when he fails to make use of the septenary transitions at ages 14 and 42.<sup>100</sup>

As the reader follows the narrative along, he will not fail to notice the distinct Islamic coloring of the text. At first reflection this may seem so mundane as to be hardly worth stressing; but in fact the Islamic overtones and imagery are so powerful that it is difficult to see them as less than part of the author's design for the book. As already observed above, the text is full of Qur'ānic quotations and phraseology; and at the end of the narrative, where Ḥayy meets Absāl and Salāmān, Qur'ānic quotations and allusions occur at a pace of three or four to the page.<sup>101</sup> Though it is not signalled as such, the story of the infant Ḥayy being cast adrift on the sea recalls the Qur'ānic story of Moses.<sup>102</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl twice specifies that a passage is being quoted from "that Firmest Revelation" (*muḥkam al-tanzīl*) or "the August Book" (*al-kitāb al-'azīz*),<sup>103</sup> and once he directly quotes a tradition from "the Apostle of God—may the blessing and peace of God be upon him."<sup>104</sup> In performing his Second Emulation, Ḥayy's walks in circles around his house and rock formations recall the circumambulation of the Ka'ba.<sup>105</sup> Absāl teaches Ḥayy what amount to the eschatological doctrines of Islam, and Ḥayy in effect becomes a Muslim, bearing witness to Absāl's prophet and assenting to the other *arkān*.<sup>106</sup> As in the religious law of Islam, the punishment for theft on Absāl's island is amputation.<sup>107</sup> And historically, the heritage of Absāl's island is a distinctly Islamic one: the way people had once lived, i.e. in a kind of Jāhiliya, was radically changed when there came to be established there "one of the true religions (*milla min al-milal al-ṣaḥīḥa*) based on the teaching of one of the ancient prophets."<sup>108</sup>

It is significant that these features should be so prominent in a narrative that Ibn Ṭufayl clearly wishes to situate in a context insulated from penetration by social or educational contacts (even Islamic ones) from external sources, this to the extent that, as suggested above in connection with other elements of the story, the milieu becomes quite mythic. Few readers in al-Andalus or the western Maghrib would have failed to feel the

<sup>100</sup>Cf. pp. 107–109 above, where Lutz Richter-Bernburg links Ibn Ṭufayl's silence on the age of 14 to his attitude toward sexuality in general.

<sup>101</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 20, 25 (two quotations), 28, 33, 46, 83, 88 (three), 90, 117, 120 (three), 144, 145, 147, 151 (four), 152 (four), 153 (three), 154.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 24–25. Cf. Sūrat Ṭāhā (20), vss. 36–40.

<sup>103</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 74, 134.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 145, 146.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 136, 145.



sense of social abstraction generated by such statements as this: "Our righteous forefathers—may God be pleased with them—have spoken of one of the sub-equatorial islands [off the coast] of India which is the island where human beings are engendered without mother or father...."<sup>109</sup> But the prominence of the Islamic presence in the abstracted and idealized milieu of *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* is precisely what will lead the reader beyond the "thin veil" at this level of the text. Here the message is clearly that Islam is pristine religion itself, the true and natural religion to which man—irrespective of his social or ethnic milieu—is innately drawn. One needs no miracles to prove the Truth that Islam represents, for as is argued in the Qur'ān itself, God's Creation is His miracle and the sum total of His proofs to mankind: "Surely in that are signs for a people who reflect."<sup>110</sup>

As one moves beyond the most literal level of interpretation, the diversity and variety adduced above makes it difficult to propose what the text would have communicated to, say, "a theologian," "a physician," or "a philosopher." Definition of such categories in anything more than the most obvious terms must be seen as deceptive and often fallacious, not only because "theologians" of even the same school, for example, would often differ among themselves on important points, but also because learning in the medieval Islamic world was not compartmentalized into insulated fields of specialization. Engineers and experts in technology, for example, were often renowned for their expertise in such other fields as physics, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, and medicine.<sup>111</sup> Ibn Ṭufayl himself was clearly viewed as such a man of many talents: a physician, propagandist, imperial advisor, poet, philosopher, litterateur, and mystic.

It can at least be said, however, that already in medieval times *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* was indeed taken to mean many different things by different observers. Al-Marrākushī described it as a work "the aim of which is to explicate the origins of the human race according to the school of thought of the [natural sciences]."<sup>112</sup> At least one scribe was impressed by the text as a book of wonders, or so it would seem from an old corruption in the textual tradition, reflected in several manuscripts, that has Ibn Ṭufayl describing Ḥayy's island as a place where trees bring forth women as their fruit.<sup>113</sup> Ibn al-Nafīs (d. 745/1345) evidently saw it as primarily a work of theology, or at least such is the conclusion suggested by the work he wrote patterned after

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>110</sup> Sūrat al-Ra'd (13), vs. 3. Cf. also Sūrat al-Raḥmān (55), vss. 1–78.

<sup>111</sup> See the important study by Ahmad Y. al-Hassan and Donald R. Hill, *Islamic Technology: an Illustrated History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 265; and most recently, Donald R. Hill, *Islamic Science and Engineering* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

<sup>112</sup> Al-Marrākushī, *Mu'jib*, p. 172.

<sup>113</sup> See *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*, p. 20 n. 15.

that of Ibn Ṭufayl.<sup>114</sup> Al-Shaḡundī (d. 629/1231) replies to the detractors of Andalusian scholarship with this challenge: "In the field of medicine, have you the equal of Ibn Ṭufayl, author of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*?"<sup>115</sup> And typical of the response from the philosophical perspective is that noticed by Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī (d. 685/1286): "I have met many scholars who esteem [Ibn Ṭufayl] over the Philosopher of al-Andalus Abū Bakr ibn Bājjā, and you could hardly ask for more fulsome praise than that!"<sup>116</sup> In some cases a medieval observer noted points of view on the text other than that of his own interests. The Andalusian Ṣūfī poet al-Shushtarī (d. 668/1269), who hailed from the same district as Ibn Ṭufayl, associated him and Ibn Rushd with one another in philosophical wakefulness (*tayaqquḡ*) on the basis of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*.<sup>117</sup> The Andalusian historian, *adīb*, and statesman Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1375), though not well-known for mystical interests, did write a Ṣūfī compendium in which he summarized Ibn Ṭufayl's story. Interestingly enough, his focus is on the death of the boy's foster-mother, the gazelle; its dissection by Ḥayy is presented as a crucial event that launches the hero on his quest for transcendent truth. Overall, Ibn al-Khaṭīb sees the work as an esoteric representation of the story of Adam.<sup>118</sup> Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) discussed the text, but unfortunately not very informatively. He mistook Ibn Ṭufayl's work for that of Ibn Sīnā of the same name, and lingered over it only long enough to read into the story of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation an argument—which he then refutes—in favor of the possibility of the extinction of species and of the physical world itself.<sup>119</sup>

The most interesting and most extensive medieval response to *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* is that of Moshe Narboni (d. 1362), a Jewish philosopher from southern France who wrote a Hebrew commentary on a Hebrew translation of the text.<sup>120</sup> As Larry Miller points out in his contribution to

<sup>114</sup>See *The Theologus Autodidactus of Ibn al-Nafīs*, edited and translated by Max Meyerhof and Joseph Schacht (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); also the comparative remarks in the paper by Remke Kruk, pp. 84, 87 above.

<sup>115</sup>Al-Shaḡundī, *Risāla fī l-difā' 'an al-Andalus*, in al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1631), *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1388/1968), III, 193.

<sup>116</sup>Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Al-Mughrib fī ḥulā l-Maghrib*, edited by Shawqī Dayf (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-ma'ārif, 1953–55), II, 85 no. 403.

<sup>117</sup>See the verse by al-Shushtarī cited in Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 776/1375), *Rawḍat al-ta'rīf bi-l-ḥubb al-sharīf*, edited by Muḥammad al-Kattānī (Casablanca: Dār al-thaqāfa, 1970), I, 281.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 281–83. Cf. Parveen Hasanali, "Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*" (M.A. thesis: McGill University, 1987), pp. 21–24.

<sup>119</sup>Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-Muqaddima*, edited by E.M. Quatrèmere (Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1858), I.2, 332.

<sup>120</sup>See Maurice Hayoun, "Le commentaire de Moïse de Narbonne (1300–1362) sur le *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* d'Ibn Ṭufayl (mort en 1185)," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire*

this volume,<sup>121</sup> Narboni, reacting to the practical and personal orientation of Ibn Ṭufayl's work,<sup>122</sup> as opposed to the theoretical and impersonal approach of other texts that engaged his attention, offers many remarks reflecting his own response as a fellow philosopher and scholar beset by travails and obstacles. Seeing in Ḥayy's isolation something comparable to his own isolation from the Jewish community in Perpignan, and in Ḥayy and Absāl's troubles on Salāmān's island a situation similar to his own, he beseeches God to conduct him to the "isle (!) of felicity" and imitates Ibn Ṭufayl by reaching out to his "brothers" with an "epistle." Commenting on *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* with allusive language, he reacts to it as a philosopher addressing his peers on the possibility of conjunction with the active intellect. For him, the social aspects are those that evoke a sense of empathy with Ḥayy's dilemma; these are then brushed aside, however, in favor of discussion further assisting the philosopher in his quest for the intuitive experience of transcendent Truth.<sup>123</sup>

Two further questions are worth considering in somewhat greater detail. First, how does the Muwaḥḥid regime figure as part of the audience of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*? Here one need but recall Ibn Ṭufayl's role as a propagandist and dialectician, and the intense Muwaḥḥid efforts to counter Christian polemics against Islam and encourage Muslims to join in and support the *jihād* against the regime's enemies to the north.<sup>124</sup> But this is not all. The Muwaḥḥid movement itself was based on Ibn Tūmart's consistent "affirmation of a moral imperative to action on the part of each individual believer" and a conviction that religious truth is propagated not only for the sake of knowing it, but also, and even more importantly, to inculcate the recognition of personal responsibility of action that possession of knowledge implies.<sup>125</sup> This, of course, brings us back to the central importance of Ḥayy's encounter with Absāl and his efforts to convey his knowledge to Salāmān's subjects. A leading advocate of the *mahdī*'s teachings would hardly have allowed Ḥayy to fail to acknowledge the social responsibility that goes with possession of Truth.

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*du Moyen Âge*, 63 (1988), pp. 23–99. Whether Narboni was also the Hebrew translator of the text remains uncertain. On his knowledge of Arabic, see Gerrit Bos, "R. Moshe Narboni, Philosopher and Physician: a Critical Analysis of *Sefer orah ḥayyim*," *Medieval Encounters*, 1 (1995), pp. 221–22.

<sup>121</sup>See above, p. 231.

<sup>122</sup>See Fradkin, "The Political Thought of Ibn Ṭufayl," pp. 246–47, stressing that "what is presented is primarily a way of life... the book is essentially practical rather than theoretical."

<sup>123</sup>See above, pp. 229–37.

<sup>124</sup>See the Introduction above, pp. 18–22.

<sup>125</sup>See Vincent J. Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability: Responsibility and Action in the Doctrine of Ibn Tūmart," *Studia Islamica*, 66 (1987), pp. 71–103, esp. pp. 89, 97.

One can also be sure that Ibn Ṭufayl's decidedly Mu'tazilite arguments, his defense of *ta'wīl*, or allegorical interpretation, and the overall pedagogical tone of the work would have been viewed with the highest regard in official circles. From the time of the *mahdī* Ibn Tūmart himself the Muwaḥḥid movement had stressed the theme of a return to pristine Islam, the achievement of this to be secured through, among other things, proper education and the elimination of *tajsīm*, the assignment of anthropomorphic attributes to God. As the Qur'ān contains many references to God that do at the literal level assign such attributes to God, the Muwaḥḥids were from the start irrevocably committed to the allegorical interpretation of scripture.<sup>126</sup> And one happy, though secondary, consequence of the isolated context in which Ḥayy develops is the fact that it relieves Ibn Ṭufayl of the awkward problem of dealing with the implications for the ruling house. In writing his commentary on Plato's *Republic*, for example, Ibn Rushd was to find it advisable to comment more than once that the ideal conditions postulated by Plato under the Philosopher-King existed in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib thanks to his patron, the Muwaḥḥid caliph Abū Ya'qūb (r. 558–80/1163–84).<sup>127</sup>

Second, if the figure of Salāmān does not personify the Muwaḥḥid regime, a most unlikely conclusion in any event, to what does he refer? As indicated above, he is the archetype of the Mālikī *fuqahā'*. But this should not be taken as an indication that Ibn Ṭufayl wished to propose a simplistic dichotomy of recondite philosophers bedeviled by irrational jurists. Although the most impassioned rhetoric in the text is reserved for bitter criticism of Salāmān and the views he represents,<sup>128</sup> this cannot be taken as denunciation of the Mālikī school as a whole. The *madhhab* was hardly a doctrinal monolith, and only one school of opinion within it upheld the radically literalist views that made all esoteric disciplines difficult to pursue in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib.

Of this the two most relevant proofs are Ibn Ṭufayl himself and his younger colleague Ibn Rushd. As Cornell suggests, Ibn Ṭufayl probably belonged intellectually to the circle of Andalusian Mālikī scholars who, though conservative in other respects, were fond of *falsafa*.<sup>129</sup> Such intellectuals were prominent under the Murābiṭūn, and the students of those

<sup>126</sup>See, for example, Ignaz Goldziher, "Mohammed ibn Toumart et la théologie de l'Islam dans le Maghreb, au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle," his Introduction to *Le livre de Mohammed ibn Toumart*, pp. 1–106; Roger Le Tourneau, *The Almohad Movement in North Africa in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 34–36.

<sup>127</sup>*Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, edited and translated by E.I.J. Rosenthal, revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 180, 205.

<sup>128</sup>*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, pp. 150–53.

<sup>129</sup>See above, p. 163.

who survived the regime's downfall are probably to be identified with the *ṭalaba* that Ibn Ṣāhib al-Ṣalāt (*fl. ca.* 590/1194) describes as gathering around Abū Ya'qūb to discuss philosophical topics.<sup>130</sup>

The situation is far clearer with Ibn Rushd, who was one of the leading Mālikī jurists of his time and composed works of Mālikī jurisprudence as well as works of philosophy and a commentary on the *Creed* of Ibn Tūmart.<sup>131</sup> In fact, the work of his most relevant to our concerns here, the *Faṣl al-maqāl*, is in structure and argument indistinguishable from a Mālikī *fatwā*.<sup>132</sup> Once again, the dangers involved in precise and narrow definition of the various intellectual perspectives of interest to us here become evident.

Finally, is *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* a work from which one can extract something of Ibn Ṭufayl's own personal views as a Muslim thinker? His formal philosophical opinions are only one dimension of this, and beyond that one might wonder what his basic concerns as an intellectual were. Hourani portrayed him as typical of the classical Greek and medieval Muslim philosopher concerned above all else for the care of his own soul. But does one need to write a work as rich and complex as *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* in order to care for one's own soul? Both our author and his primary character would certainly have disagreed. Neither Ḥayy nor Ibn Ṭufayl can be satisfied to "know" in glorious isolation from the rest of mankind, much as Plato's prisoner in the Allegory of the Cave, once he beholds the Form of the Good, recognizes his responsibility to return to free the others, however unwilling they be to follow him. In the end, and in line with fundamental Muwaḥḥid doctrine, what matters is to have fulfilled the responsibility that goes along with knowledge, for to know the Truth is to know that it must prevail. Ibn Rushd sought to argue for this in terms of the legal thinking of philosophy's most uncompromising opponents. Ibn Ṭufayl chooses a different tack, raising the question of "What is the Truth?" in such a way that the responses he suggests, in their range of sophistication and approximations

<sup>130</sup> Conrad, "Andalusian Physician," pp. 9–10.

<sup>131</sup> On this important dimension of Ibn Rushd's career, see C.A. Nallino, "Intorno al *Kitāb al-bayān* del giurista Ibn Rushd," in *Homenaje á D. Francisco Codera en su jubilación del profesorado*, edited by Eduardo Saavedra (Zaragoza: Mariano Escar, 1904), pp. 67–77; Robert Brunschvig, "Averroes juriste," in *Etudes d'orientalisme dédiées à la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1962), I, 35–68; A.M. Goichon, "L'exégèse coranique d'Avicenne jugée par Averroès," in *Actas del primer congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos* (Madrid: Comité permanente del Congreso de estudios árabes e islámicos, 1964), pp. 89–99; Iḥsān 'Abbās, "Nawāzil Ibn Rushd," *Al-Abḥāth*, 22 (1969), pp. 3–63; Abdel Magid Turki, "La place d'Averroès juriste dans l'histoire du Mālikisme et de l'Espagne musulmane," *Multiple Averroès*, edited by Jean Jolivet (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1978), pp. 33–43.

<sup>132</sup> See Hourani, *Averroes*, p. 19: "The subject whose status is in question is philosophy, but the treatise itself is not a philosophical work; it is a legal treatise *about* philosophy."

to this Truth, are not less broad than the range of possible readers. For him, attainment of the Truth clearly does not end in the ethereal domains of transcendent intuitive experience. *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* closes with our hero back on his island pursuing his devotions. But his knowledge was not complete until his encounter with Absāl confronted him with the issue of the moral imperative of social action incumbent upon those who possess the Truth. And Ibn Ṭufayl tantalizes us with the possibility that even in the wake of defeat this program is not entirely abandoned, for Ḥayy returns to his island in the company of Absāl, his novice and student. The proposition that once recognized, the social aspects of the possession of Truth can never be given up, is surely one with which Ibn Ṭufayl would have agreed. The proper understanding of his great work, in fact, requires recognition of the central role of this consideration among the primary factors that resulted in the creation of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.

## RESEARCH RESOURCES ON IBN ṬUFAYL AND ḤAYY IBN YAQẒĀN

Lawrence I. Conrad  
(Wellcome Institute)

It has on occasion been observed that with the possible exception of the *Thousand and One Nights*, no work from the literary heritage of classical Islam has been published or translated so frequently as Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. It is certainly true that there are many printings of the Arabic text available for study, as well as translations into at least fourteen languages; these latter are frequently of particular interest, since translators have often provided valuable notes and commentaries. The scholarly literature is even more extensive; there are numerous monographs dedicated to *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, especially in Arabic, and much important research is to be found in articles scattered thorough a broad range of journals and Festschriften, as well as in studies on other authors and subjects.

The aim of this bibliography is to provide a provisional guide to the materials most pertinent to the study of Ibn Ṭufayl, insofar as these are known to this writer. The following subjects are covered:

- A. Manuscripts of the extant works of Ibn Ṭufayl
- B. Editions of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*
- C. Translations of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*
- D. Modern studies on Ibn Ṭufayl and his work

While generally inclusive in scope, it has in certain respects not been possible to aim for exhaustive coverage. A detailed search of Arabic periodical literature, for example, has not been attempted, and some valuable studies may therefore have been missed. A particular problem is posed by work on such related concerns as the Muwaḥḥids, Ṣūfism and philosophy in al-Andalus and the western Maghrib, and authors or other personalities with some important connection to Ibn Ṭufayl, e.g. Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Tūmart, the caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf, and Ibn Rushd. While research on such subjects has been included when of particular pertinence or importance, it seemed undesirable to obscure the distinction between work

in which Ibn Ṭufayl is discussed at length or with especially important conclusions, and other research in which he is of only passing interest.

An effort has been made to verify all information provided herein, but in some cases this has not yet been possible. It has not been possible to obtain copies of all the manuscripts, and some rare editions, translations, and studies have not been seen; these are included nonetheless, as the information currently available at least makes it possible for those interested in the subject to search for them themselves. A few articles, however, have not been included because of insufficient information.

The task of compiling this bibliography has been made considerably easier by earlier listings by various scholars. I have made full use of Pearson's *Index Islamicus*, and there are useful lists of material in the works of 'Abdurrahmān Badawi, Carl Brockelmann, Léon Gauthier, and Parveen Hasanali (for details, see Part D below), as well as in the more recent translations. Further material has come to light in the acquisitions records of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), the British Library (London), the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), the Regenstein Library (University of Chicago), and the School of Oriental and African Studies Library (London). I am also grateful to Cristina Álvarez Millán, Maribel Fierro, Remke Kruk, and Nikolai Serikoff for advice and details concerning various items.<sup>1</sup>

### *A. Manuscripts of the Extant Works of Ibn Ṭufayl*

#### HAYY IBN YAQZĀN

At present the work appears to survive in eleven Mss., only seven of which have been taken into account in any of the printed editions. The fifth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and eleventh copies described below appear in no previous listing.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY, Oxford: Ms. Pococke 263.

This Ms., dated 703/1303 and bearing the title *Risālat Hayy ibn Yaqzān*, was a copy purchased by Edward Pococke Sr. in the Middle East and comprised the basis for his son's *editio princeps* of the text. See John Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium... catalogus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1787), I, 64 col. 2 no. 133.2. This copy has been used in the editions of Pococke and Gauthier.

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<sup>1</sup>It is planned to revise this bibliography as corrections and additions become available. I would be most grateful for any relevant information that readers of this volume can provide.



BRITISH MUSEUM, London: Ms. Add. 16,659, fols. 235v–258r.

An undated copy of about the twelfth/eighteenth century, bearing the title *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān* and figuring as the tenth text in a fine *majmū'a* of 50 works of primarily philosophy and theology, but also including other topics. See William Cureton and Charles Rieu, *Catalogus codicorum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asseverantur* (London: British Museum, 1846–71), p. 448 col. 2 no. 978.10. This Ms. has been taken into consideration only in the second edition of Gauthier in 1936.

BIBLIOTHEEK DER RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT TE LEIDEN: Ms. Or. 2291.

An exemplar copied in AH 1298 from the Cairo Ms. Taymūr *Ḥikma* 19 (see below), and bearing the same title and false attribution to Ibn Sab'īn. This Ms. was part of a private collection in Medina that was sold to E.J. Brill by its owner, Amīn al-Madanī, and passed intact into the possession of Leiden University Library. See Carlo Landberg, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes provenant d'une bibliothèque privée à El-Medīna et appartenant à la maison E.J. Brill* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1883), p. 160 no. 573, where the attribution to Ibn Sab'īn is accepted. This Ms. has been used only in Gauthier's second edition of 1936.

REAL BIBLIOTECA DE EL ESCORIAL, Real Monasterio de El Escorial, San Lorenzo: Ms. Casiri 693, fols., 145r–177v.

This exemplar bears the title *Kitāb asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriḡiyya*, and hence was often mistaken by nineteenth-century scholars for a work by Ibn Ṭufayl distinct from *Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*. See Hartwig Derenbourg, *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Escorial*, I (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1884), pp. 492–93 no. 696.3. This exemplar is incomplete and badly damaged by moisture; the opening folios are unreadable. Because of its poor condition, this copy has not been considered in any edition of the Arabic text.

DİL VE TARİH–COĞRAFYA FAKÜLTESİ KÜTÜPHANESİ, Ankara Üniversitesi: Ms. İsmail Saib I 1696.1, fols. 1v–46v.

This exemplar is the first work in an 8th/15th century *majmū'a* of five philosophical texts, and bears the title *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaḡzān*. Discovered by Fuat Sezgin in the 1970s, it has been described by Taylor (see Part D below), but has never been used in any edition of the text.

SÜLEYMANIYE KÜTÜPHANESİ, Istanbul: Ms. Hacı Mahmud 5683.1, fols. 1r–59r.

This very recent Ms. is a *majmū'a* of the same five philosophical texts that appear in the Ankara Ms., and in the same order. Taylor (see Part D below) has proven that the Hacı Mahmud Ms. is a direct copy of the İsmail Saib text. This Süleymaniye Ms. is undoubtedly the source of the two Istanbul

printings of AH 1300 (assuming that such printings were made, see Part B below).

DĀR AL-KUTUB AL-MIṢRĪYA, Cairo: Ms. Taymūr *Hikma* 19.

This Ms. also bears the title *Asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya*, as in the Escorial copy, and a false attribution to the Andalusian Ṣūfī Ibn Sabʿīn (d. 669/1269). See the *Fihrist al-kutub al-ʿarabīya al-mahfūẓa bi-l-kutubkhāna al-khidwīya... bi-Miṣr* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-shaykh ʿUthmān ʿAbd al-Rāziq, 1300–1309/1884–91), VI, 88 no. 4193. This Ms. probably provided the textual basis for the early Cairo printings.

DĀR AL-KUTUB AL-MIṢRĪYA, Cairo: Ms. Taymūr *Taṣawwuf* 149, fols. 324–400.

Here the book is entitled *Al-Mirqāt al-zulfā wa-l-mashrab al-aṣfā* and copied into a *majmūʿa* (written in *maghribī* script) containing many essays by Ibn Sabʿīn and some verse by the Andalusian Ṣūfī poet al-Shushtarī (d. 668/1269). See Fuʿād Sayyid, *Fihrist al-makhtūṭāt, nashra bi-l-makhtūṭāt allatī iqtanathā al-Dār min sana 1936–1955* (Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, 1380–83/1961–63), III, 47 (Ms. 25,399, photostat). This Ms. has not been used in any edition of the Arabic text.

AL-MAKTABA AL-WAṬANĪYA, Algiers: Ms. 2023.

This Ms. is a text in *maghribī* script, dated 1180/1766 and bearing a title similar to that of the second Taymūr Ms., *Al-Marāqī al-zulfā wa-l-mawrid al-aṣfā*, but attributed to Ibn Sīnā. It was found in the Masjid Sīdī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in Algiers by a local scholar; drawn to the attention of Gauthier by J.D. Luciani, then a high official in the French administration, it was subsequently donated to the Algerian national library. Gauthier considered this to be an extremely accurate copy from a very old exemplar of the text, and it comprised the sole direct manuscript evidence for his first edition of 1900. Even in his second edition, it remained his authoritative copy. It has not, however, been used in other editions.

MAKTABAT ĀL AL-ṬAṆṬĀWĪ, Damascus: unnumbered Ms.

A copy of the text figures as the last of four books included in a *majmūʿa* copied by Muḥammad al-Ṭaṇṭāwī in 1284/1867–68. Here the work bears a title similar to those of the second Taymūr and Algiers Mss., *Al-Mirqāt al-zulfā wa-l-mashrab al-aṣfā*, but is correctly attributed to Ibn Ṭufayl. Textually, it clearly belongs to the same branch of the manuscript tradition as the other two exemplars with this title, and may prove to be a copy made from Ms. Taymūr *Taṣawwuf* 149. Al-Ṭaṇṭāwī's copy has only been used in the Damascus editions by Jamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil ʿAyyād (see Part B below), who regarded it as very accurate and made it the basis for their text. The entire Āl al-Ṭaṇṭāwī collection has more recently become part of the Maktabat al-Asad al-waṭanīya in Damascus.

## UNIVERSITI MALAYA (Kuala Lumpur).

A recent worldwide survey of Islamic manuscripts (see above, p. 3) mentions an Ibn Ṭufayl manuscript, without specifying that it is a copy of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, in the collection of books and manuscripts owned by Zab'a (Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ibn Aḥmad), a renowned Malay man of letters, and donated to the library of the University of Malaya in 1965. So far no further details are available, and the Ms. has not been used in any edition.

In 1900 Gauthier was of the opinion that one or more manuscripts must exist in the Arab East or Istanbul, since the Cairo and Istanbul printings of the late nineteenth century could not have been based on the Cairo manuscript he had identified (i.e. Taymūr *Hikma* 19). As the details above show, his conclusion was correct. These elusive copies can now be identified as the Hacı Mahmud Ms. in Istanbul and the Taymūr *Taşawwuf* Ms. in Cairo.

## AL-URJŪZA AL-ṬAWĪLA FĪ L-ṬİBB

KHIZĀNAT JĀMIʿAT AL-QARAWĪYĪN, Fez: Ms. 3158.

This *maghribī* Ms. is the only known copy of the work, and bears a number of major gaps. On the uncertain title, see p. 8 n. 27 above.

AL-KHIZĀNA AL-ĀMMA LI-L-KUTUB, Rabat: Ms. 3158/50L.

This is actually a microfilm of the Fez manuscript, which is otherwise generally inaccessible for technical reasons. Unfortunately, some folios of the Fez Ms. are unclear in this microfilm.

*B. Editions of Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*

*Philosophus autodidactus, sive epistola Abi Jaafar, Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan.* In quā Ostenditur, quomodo ex Inferiorum contemplatione ad Superiorum notitiam Ratio humana ascendere possit. Ex Arabicā in linguam Latinam versa ad Edvardo Pocockio A.M. Aedis Chrisi alumno. Oxford: H. Hall, 1671.

This *editio princeps* offers a faithful (and overly so) rendering of the Oxford Ms., with only a few emendations indicated in the margin. It was reprinted in 1700 with the claim that corrections had been made, but the two texts are in fact identical. Pococke's father, the great Oxford Arabist of the same name, had also been working on the text, and Nahas (see Part D below) has shown that there are grounds for suggesting that he may have been involved in his son's project.

*Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya*, istakhlaṣahā min durar jawāhir alfāẓ al-raʾīs Abī ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā al-imām al-faylasūf al-kāmil al-ʿārif Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭufayl, asbala Allāh ʿalayhumā riwāq raḥmatihī wa-ʿammahumā bi-wāsiʿ maghfiratihī amīn. Cairo: Idārat al-waṭan, AH 1299.

This was the first Middle Eastern printing of the text, and was based on Ms. Taymūr *Ḥikma* 19 in the Khedivial Library.

*Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya*, istakhlaṣahā min durar jawāhir alfāẓ al-raʾīs Abī ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā al-imām al-faylasūf al-kāmil al-ʿārif Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭufayl, asbala Allāh ʿalayhumā riwāq raḥmatihī wa-ʿammahumā bi-wāsiʿ maghfiratihī amīn. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat wādī l-Nīl, AH 1299.

This printing is based on the Idārat al-waṭan text and corrects some of its errors.

Gauthier refers to two other Cairo printings of AH 1300, but admits that he had never seen them. In all likelihood they were simply reimpresions of one or both of the above Cairo editions.

Two Istanbul printings of AH 1300 are cited by Gauthier and others using his work, but their existence has never been confirmed.

Alexandria: Al-Maṭbaʿat al-miṣrīya, 1898.

This printing is mentioned by Ṣalībā and ʿAyyād in their edition of 1940, but is not otherwise confirmed.

*Hayy ben Yaqdhân, roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl*, texte arabe publié d'après un nouveau manuscrit avec les variantes des anciens textes et traduction français par Léon Gauthier (Algiers: P. Fontana, 1900).

The first critical edition of the text, based on the Algiers Ms., the Pococke printing, and the Cairo texts published by the Idārat al-waṭan and Wādī l-Nīl in AH 1299. This work also includes a valuable introduction and the first published French translation (see Part C below) with useful notes.

*Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya*, istakhlaṣahā min durar jawāhir alfāẓ al-raʾīs Abī ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā al-imām al-faylasūf al-kāmil al-ʿārif Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭufayl, asbala Allāh ʿalayhumā riwāq raḥmatihī wa-ʿammahumā bi-wāsiʿ maghfiratihī amīn. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Nīl, 1322/1904.

An edition based on a critical collation of the two Cairo printings of AH 1299, and interestingly enough, reproducing the numbered paragraph divisions first introduced in Ashwell's English translation of 1686 (see Part C below).

A concluding note to the edition states that this numbering was included to facilitate comparison with the English translation.

*Kitāb asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya aw-Risālat Ḥayy iobn Yaqzān*, istakhlaṣahā min durar jawāhir alfāz al-raʿīs Abī ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā al-faylasūf Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭufayl al-Andalusī raḥimahhumā Allāh taʿālā. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-saʿāda, AH 1327.

A version based on one of the first Cairo printings of AH 1299.

*Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mashriqīya*, istakhlaṣahā min durar jawāhir alfāz al-raʿīs Abī ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā al-imām al-faylasūf al-kāmil al-ʿārif Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Ṭufayl, asbala Allāh ʿalayhumā riwāq raḥmatihī wa-ʿammahumā bi-wāsiʾ maghfiratihī amīn. Cairo: Al-Maṭbaʿat al-khayrīya, AH 1340.

A printing based on the AH 1299 Cairo publication by Wādī l-Nīl, but nevertheless used by Gauthier in his second edition of 1936.

*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, [abridged and paraphrased by] Kāmil Kīlānī. Cairo: Dār al-maʿārif, 1935.

A paraphrased and fully vocalized version of the work for children, with thirteen illustrations. Kīlānī was an Egyptian editor, literary historian, and novelist who also published children's books in Arabic, with a focus on stories of cultural and educational merit. The work was reprinted in 1962.

*Ḥayy ben Yaqdhân: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl*, texte arabe avec les variantes des manuscrits et de plusieurs éditions et traduction française, par Léon Gauthier, 2e édition, revue, augmentée et complètement remaniée. Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936.

A second edition of Gauthier's 1900 effort, with extensive revisions, based on the Mss. of Algiers, London, Cairo (Taymūr *Ḥikma* 19), and Leiden, the Pococke edition, and three old Cairo printings. Gauthier's preference for the readings of the Algiers Ms. is sometimes questionable, but this edition is nevertheless the best currently available.

*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān li-Ibn Ṭufayl al-Andalusī*, qaddama lahu bi-dirāsa wa-taḥlīl Jamīl Ṣalībā wa-Kāmil ʿAyyād. Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-taraqqī, 1358/1939.

This edition is important as the first and only one to take into account the Damascus Ms., which is used as the primary basis for the text. It also offers a useful introduction and textual notes citing variants in the Damascus Ms. and parallel passages in Arabic philosophical literature. Though the editors stress the accuracy of the Damascus Ms. and claim to have collated the other printings, their own text suffers from a variety of more or less egregious errors.

*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān li-Ibn Ṭufayl al-Andalusī*, qaddama lahu bi-dirāsa wa-taḥlīl Jamīl Ṣalībā wa-Kāmil ‘Ayyād. 2nd edition. Damascus: Maṭba‘at al-taraqqī, 1359/1940.

A corrected version of their first edition, but still with significant errors.

*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān li-Ibn Sīnā wa-Ibn Ṭufayl wa-l-Suhrawardī*, taḥqīq wa-ta‘līq Aḥmad Amīn (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1952), pp. 55–131.

A publication of the text as one of the three classical Arabic works of the same title, with a useful comparative introduction by a learned Egyptian scholar. The Arabic text derives from one of the early Cairo printings, and has no independent basis in manuscript evidence. The textual notes identify Qur’ānic passages, clarify allusions to personalities, and comment on philological questions.

*Qiṣṣat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān li-Ibn Ṭufayl al-Andalusī*, ma‘a dirāsa wa-taḥlīl bi-qalam ‘Abd al-Hādī Ḥakīm. Beirut: Dār al-Fārābī, 1954.

*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, [allafahu] Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭufayl. Qaddama lahu wa-‘allaqa ‘alayhi Albayr Naṣrī Nādir. Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1963.

A printing prepared for use by Arab students, apparently based on Gauthier’s 1936 text. The notes clarify obscure passages, and the editor divides the text into sections introduced by remarks summarizing each section. This edition was reprinted by the same firm in 1986.

*Falsafat Ibn Ṭufayl wa-risālatuhu Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, ta‘līf wa-taḥqīq al-duktūr ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd. Cairo: Maktabat al-anglū--al-miṣ-rīya, 1964.

An uncritical printing of the text, with a long introduction on Ibn Ṭufayl and his works and thought.

*Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān li-Ibn Ṭufayl al-Andalusī*, taḥqīq Muḥammad ‘Izzat Naṣr Allāh. Beirut: Dār Filastīn, 1970.

A text apparently based on the Ṣalībā and ‘Ayyād edition and collated against several other earlier printings, with a short but useful introduction and textual notes.

*Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, [allafahu] Ibn Ṭufayl. Qaddama lahu wa-ḥaqqaqahu Fārūq Sa‘d. Beirut: Dār al-āfāq al-jadīda, 1394/1974.

This is essentially a reproduction of Gauthier’s 1936 text, without notes or other aids. A long introduction discusses not only the author and his work, but also the scientific possibility of spontaneous generation, genuine accounts of “wild boys,” Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, gazelles, Tarzan, and Rodin’s “Le penseur.” The editor has provided drawings of scenes from the

book as conceived by himself, mainly Tarzan, Robinson, and Mowgli-like views, but also including “portraits” of Ḥayy and Absāl.

‘Abd al-Amīr Shams al-Dīn, *Al-Fikr al-tarbawī ‘inda Ibn Ṭufayl*. Beirut: Dār Iqra’, 1404/1984.

A printing of the text as Part II of his study of the work as an “educational tale.”

There have been further printings of the work, especially in Beirut since the 1970s, but these in all cases seem to be reproductions of some earlier printing through resetting of type or even photoreproduction, and thus are of no value.

### *Translations of Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*

#### CZECH

*Živý Syn Bdícího: Hajj ibn Jakzán*, přel. z arabského Ivan Hrbek. Prague: Státní Naklad Krásné Literatury, Hudby a Umění, 1957.

A translation based on Gauthier’s first edition of the Arabic text, with an extensive introduction on the history of al-Andalus and Islamic philosophy up to the time of Ibn Ṭufayl and the publication history of the text. The book is illustrated with black and white photographs of Andalusian art and architecture. Qur’ānic quotations are identified in the text, but otherwise there are no notes.

#### DUTCH

*Het leeven van Hai ebn Yokdhan*, in het arabisch beschreeven door Abu Jaaphar ebn Tophail, en uit de Latynsche overzettinge van Eduard Pocock A.M. in het Nederduitsch vertaald, waar in getoond wordt, hoe iemand buiten eenige ommegang met menschen, ofte onderwyzinge, kan komen tot de kennisse van zich zelve, en van God. Amsterdam: J. Rieuwertsz, 1672.

This translation from Pococke’s Latin text appeared only a year after the publication of its source, and marked the first appearance of the book in

a European vernacular. It was revised by Adriaan Reland and republished by the firm of Willem Lamsveld in Amsterdam in 1701, with the addition of some very fine engravings and indices of names and technical terms, and most interestingly, the detail that the previously anonymous translation had been made "door S.D.B." Several scholars (von Brockdorff, Kruk, Meijer, Mercier; see Part D below) have discussed the venerable question of whether or not there is some connection between this work and Spinoza. His authorship is extremely improbable, and the translation was most likely done by Johan Bouwmeester, a friend of Spinoza's, and perhaps with his encouragement. This second edition was reprinted in 1721 in Utrecht by the firm of Hendrik Schouten.

*De Natuurlijke Wijsgeer of het leven van Hai ebn Yokdan*, in het arabisch beschreven door Abu Jaaphar ebn Tophail, voordezen uit de Latynse overzetting van Eduard Pocok, A.M. in het Nederduitsch vertaald door S.D.B. En nu op nieuws met de arabische grondtext vergeleken, en met aanmerkingen over eenige duistere plaatzen en spreekwyzen verrykt. Rotterdam: P. van der Veer in Rotterdam, 1701.

A version of the (probable) Bouwmeester translation of 1701, but with fewer (and higher quality) engravings of entirely different scenes.

*Wat geen oog heeft gezien, geen oor heeft gehoord en in geen mensenhart is opgekomen. De geschiedenis van Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, uit het Arabisch vertaald en ingeleid door Remke Kruk. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1985.

An excellent translation, with minimal endnotes, prepared for a general readership and rendered from Gauthier's 1936 text. The Introduction discusses the life and social and intellectual background of Ibn Ṭufayl, his works, and the previous Dutch translations and other influences of the text in Europe. Kruk also translates the two mystical poems by Ibn Ṭufayl preserved in al-Marrākushī's *Muʿjib* and reproduces the engravings from the 1701 Dutch translation printed in Rotterdam.

## ENGLISH

*An Account of the Oriental Philosophy*, shewing the wisdom of some renowned men of the East; and particularly, the profound wisdom of Hai Ebn Yokdan, both in natural and divine things; which he attained without all converse with men, (while he yet lived a solitary life, remote from all men from his infancy, till he arrived at such perfection.) Writ originally in Arabick, by Abi Jaaphar Ebn Tophail;



and out of the Arabick translated into Latine, by Edward Pocok, a student in Oxford, and now faithfully out of his Latine, translated into English: for a service. London, 1674.

This translation by George Keith, rector of Edburton and a controversial Quaker advocate and polemicist, is a literal translation from Pococke's Latin. Keith's aim in undertaking the translation was to promote his argument that religion is a matter of intense personal experience, and that one's "Inner Light" can lead to secure knowledge of God and religious truth.

*The History of Hai Eb'n Yockdan, an Indian Prince: or, the Self-Taught Philosopher.* Written originally in the Arabick tongue, by Abi Jaafar Eb'n Tophail, a philosopher by profession, and a Mahometan by religion. Wherein is demonstrated, by what steps and degrees, humane reason, improved by diligent observation and experience, may arrive to the knowledge of natural things, and from thence to the discovery of supernaturals; more especially of God, and the concernments of the other world. Set forth not long ago in the original Arabick, with the Latin version, by Edw. Pocock M.A. and student of Christ-church, Oxon 1671. And now translated into English. London: Richard Chiswell, 1686.

This translation by George Ashwell is noteworthy for his decision to drop Ibn Ṭufayl's extremely important introduction (a grave error followed by several later translators), and to prune out material unlikely to appeal to seventeenth-century English audiences, e.g. the account of Ḥayy's spontaneous generation and details on meteorology. He also provides section numbers through the text, a feature copied by several later English translators and the Cairo editor of 1322/1904 (see Part B above). An added epilogue extols the ways in which Nature leads man to God.

*The Improvement of Human Reason*, exhibited in the life of Hai ebn Yokdhan: written in Arabick above 500 years ago, by Abu Jaafar ebn Tophail, in which is demonstrated, by what methods one may, by the meer light of nature, attain the knowledg of things natural and supernatural; more particularly the knowledg of God, and the affairs of another life. Illustrated with proper figures. Newly translated from the original Arabick, by Simon Ockley, M.A. Vicar of Swavesey in Cambridgshire. With an appendix, in which the possibility of man's attaining the true knowledg of God, and things necessary to salvation, without instruction, is briefly consider'd. London: E. Powell, 1708.

This first English translation, made directly from Pococke's Arabic text, was the work of a Cambridge Arabist; the translation is both more elegant and less faithful to the original Arabic, and reproduces the engravings from the 1701 Rotterdam translation into Dutch. This English version was

reprinted several times in London and Dublin in the early eighteenth century, and in the edition of 1731 Ibn Ṭufayl's introduction, all references to Ḥayy's spontaneous generation, and the engravings were dropped. In 1905 Edward A. van Dyck, an American Protestant missionary in Egypt, made minor revisions to the translation, added a section entitled "What is a Ḥufy?," and had the work published by the firm of Dār al-ma'ārif in Cairo for use by his students. In 1983 Ockley's version was again reprinted, this time by the firm of Georg Olms in Hildesheim and Zürich.

*The Life and Surprizing Adventures of Don Antonio de Trezzanio*, who was self-educated, and lived forty-five years in an uninhabited island in the East Indies. London: H. Sergeant, [1761].

An anonymous tale abridging or paraphrasing much from Ockley's translation (as well as taking up elements from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*), with engravings to illustrate the text. The date of 1761 is usually assigned to this work, but the book itself bears no date.

*The Awakening of the Soul: a Philosophical Romance*, rendered from the Arabic with introduction by Paul Brönnle. London: Orient Press, 1904.

An abridged popular translation of "the most interesting parts" of the book, based on Pococke's Arabic text. Ibn Ṭufayl's important introduction is again dropped, and Brönnle's introduction does little more than summarize the story. This version, published in the series "Wisdom of the East," went through several reprintings by major publishers in Great Britain and the United States prior to the First World War.

*The History of Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, by Abu Bakr ibn Tufail, translated from the Arabic by Simon Ockley, revised, and with an introduction by A.S. Fulton. London: Chapman and Hall, 1929.

A very popular revision of Ockley's text by the Keeper of Oriental Books and Manuscripts at the British Museum, who sought to correct Ockley on the basis of Gauthier's 1900 edition and to eliminate liberties Ockley had taken with the Arabic text. Fulton's new introduction is openly hostile to Islam as an obstacle to enlightenment, to Muslim thinkers as obsessed with religion, and to the Muwaḥḥids as despots; he also follows Ashwell, the 1731 edition of Ockley, and Brönnle in eliminating Ibn Ṭufayl's introduction (in this case, because "it contains nothing of general interest"). There are very few notes, and these simply identify Qur'ānic quotations. An American edition was published simultaneously in New York by Frederick A. Stokes, and the work was reprinted in London in 1986 by Darf. Objectionable in several ways, if an improvement on Ockley, this version is in any case entirely superseded by the translation of Goodman.

George N. Atiyeh, "Ḥayy, the Son of Yaqzān," in *Medieval Political Philosophy*, edited by Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (Toronto: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 134–62.

A partial rendering, based on Gauthier's 1936 Arabic text, prepared for a reader on medieval political philosophy. Ibn Ṭufayl's introduction, the description of Ḥayy's three emulations, and the account of his encounter with Absāl and Salāmān are translated; the remainder of the text is summarized, and the translator provides a small number of useful endnotes. Overall this is a very commendable introduction to Ibn Ṭufayl, despite its extremely truncated presentation of the text.

*Ibn Tufayl's Hayy ibn Yaqzān: a Philosophical Tale*, translated with introduction and notes by Lenn Evan Goodman. New York: Twayne, 1972.

Though sometimes overly exegetical, this translation marks a major advance over previous English versions and is certainly the text to be read in this language. Copiously annotated, provided with a detailed introduction, and based on Gauthier's very good second edition of the Arabic, this work is unique in that it also approaches the text from the perspective of world philosophy, as opposed to the history of Islamic thought.

*The Journey of the Soul: the Story of Hai bin Yaqzan as told by Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Tufail; a new translation by Riad Kocache*, Ph.D. London: Octagon Press, 1982.

An English rendering aimed at presenting the work in terms of the modern mysticism of Idries Shah. Ibn Ṭufayl's important introduction is only summarized, and the translation of the rest of the text is abridged and misleading. The Foreword introducing the translation is of little interest, and the few textual notes mainly identify Qur'ānic quotations.

## FRENCH

E.M. Quatrèmere, *Le philosophe sans maître, ou la vie de Hai ebn Yoqḍhan*, écrite en arabe par Abu-Jaafar Ebn Tophail, et traduite en français, avec un discours préliminaire sur la philosophie des gymnosophistes et celles des Sofis.

An unpublished translation responding, as its author claims, to sentiments that *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* should be available in French. The extant manuscript of this translation is held by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. See Josef Aumer, *Die arabische Handschriften der Königliche Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München* (Munich: Staatsbibliothek München, 1866), p. 421 no. 932.

*Hayy ben Yaqdhân, roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl*, texte arabe publié d'après un nouveau manuscrit avec les variantes des anciens textes et traduction français par Léon Gauthier. Algiers: P. Fontana, 1900.

This first published French translation of the text accompanies Gauthier's first critical edition, and also provides a valuable introduction and notes.

*Hayy ben Yaqdhân: roman philosophique d'Ibn Thofaïl*, texte arabe avec les variantes des manuscrits et de plusieurs éditions et traduction française, par Léon Gauthier, 2e édition, revue, augmentée et complètement remaniée. Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1936.

A second edition of Gauthier's 1900 translation, but based on his new edition of the Arabic, and with such extensive revisions to the introduction, translation, and notes, as to amount to a new work. This work remains one of the most outstanding translations available in any language. It would seem that no other French translation has since been attempted.

*Le philosophe sans maître: histoire de Hayy ibn Yaqzân*, présentation de Georges Labica, traduction de Léon Gauthier. Algiers: Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion, 1969.

A reprinting of Gauthier's 1936 translation, to which Labica added a new introduction, fuller annotation, comparative chronologies of events in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, the Arab East, and Europe, and a bibliography for general readers. A photographic reprint of this book was published in Paris by J. Vrin in 1983.

## GERMAN

*Der von sich selbst gelehrte Weltweise*, übersetzt von J. Georg Pritius. Frankfurt, 1726.

The translator claimed to be working from Pococke's Latin, but in the preface to his own translation (see below), Eichhorn claimed that this first German rendering had been made from the English text of Ockley. The work is extremely rare; no copies seem to exist outside of Germany, and indeed, none is listed in German catalogues, bibliographies, or accessions lists seen by this writer.

*Der Naturmensch; oder, Geschichte des Hai ebn Yoktan*, ein morganländischer Roman des Abu Dschafar Ebn Tofail, aus dem Arabischen übersetzt von Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, Professor zu Jena. Berlin and Stettin: Friedrich Nicolai, 1782.

A German version made directly from the Arabic, and superior to that of Pritius.

*Ibn Tufail. Das Erwachen der Seele*, nach dem Arabischen. Mit einer Einleitung von Paul Brönnle, aus dem Englischen übersetzt von A.M. Heinck. Rostock: C.J.E. Volckmann, 1907.

A German translation based on the abridged English rendering of Paul Brönnle.

*Hajj ibn Jaqzan, der Naturmensch. Ein philosophische Robinson-Roman aus dem arabischen Mittelalter*, aus dem Arabischen übersetzt von Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Stefan Schreiner. Leipzig and Weimar: Kiepenheuer, 1983.

A revised version of Eichhorn's 1782 translation, with updated annotation and commentary.

Ibn Tufail, *Der Ur-Robinson*, mit einem Nachwort von Otto F. Best. Munich: Matthes und Seitz, 1987.

## HEBREW

An anonymous Hebrew translation was used by Moshe Narbone as the basis for his commentary, which on the basis of internal evidence was probably written in the aftermath of the Black Death of 1348–49. Numerous manuscripts survive in European libraries (the most important are in Paris, Leiden, and Munich), but the text, while studied in valuable articles by Hayoun and Vajda (see Part D below) and Miller (pp. 229–37 above), remains unpublished. While Narboni knew at least some Arabic, it is unlikely that he was the Hebrew translator of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*.

## ITALIAN

Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Ṭufayl, *Epistola di Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān: I segreti della filosofia orientale*, introduzione, traduzione e note di Paola Carusi, presentazione di Alessandro Bausani. Milan: Rusconi, 1983.

## LATIN

Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, Cod. A. IX. 29, fols. 79v–116r.

A medieval Latin rendering by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494) made from Moshe Narboni's 1349 Hebrew commentary, and included as the third work in a collection of other scientific and religious texts. See Oriana Cartaregia, *I manoscritti "G. Gaslini" della Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova* (Rome: Istituto Polygrafico e Zecca di Stato, 1991), pp. 29–31. Pico della Mirandola was a leading humanist of the Renaissance, and was very interested in Islamic and Jewish philosophy. His Latin translation of this work, however, appears to have had no impact beyond the fifteenth century, and has been almost entirely unknown among modern scholars working on Ibn Ṭufayl.

*Philosophus autodidactus, sive epistola Abi Jaafar, Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan. In qua Ostenditur, quomodo ex Inferiorum contemplatione ad Superiorum notitiam Ratio humana ascendere possit, ex Arabicâ in linguam Latinam versa ad Edvardo Pocockio.* Oxford: H. Hall, 1671.

This first translation gave European audiences some basic sense of the text, but was far too literal; some passages, in fact, require reference back to the Arabic to arrive at the intended meaning of the latter.

## PERSIAN

*Zindah-i bīdār (Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān), aṣar-i Ibn Ṭufayl tarjumah-i Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfār.* Tehran: Bungāh-i tarjumah va-nashr-i kitāb, 1956.

A translation based on collation of the Cairo printing of AH 1327, the Ṣalībā and 'Ayyād Damascus edition of 1940, and the text in Aḥmad Amīn's 1952 Cairo collection. The introduction discusses Ibn Ṭufayl and his times and thought, and there are a limited number of textual notes. The work was reprinted in 1981.

*Bachchah-i Ādam, qisṣah-i sādeh va-kūtāh Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān, negarshī Mahdī Āzar Yazdī.* Tehran: Sāzmān Intishārāt-i ashrafī, 1967.

## POLISH

*Ibn Ṭufajl: Ḥajj ibn Jakẓān*, opowieść filozoficzna, przetłumaczył z języka arabskiego następem i przypisami zaopatrzył Józef Bielawski. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwa Naukowe, 1958.

A translation, based on Gauthier's second edition of the Arabic text, by a scholar of medieval Islamic philosophy and author of several studies on Ibn Ṭufayl (see Part D below). The long introduction discusses political and intellectual background, literary influences, and the publication history of the text. There are useful endnotes to the translation, and a good bibliography.

## RUSSIAN

Ibn Tufail', Muxammad ibn Abd al-Malik, *Roman o Xaie syne Yakzana*, Per. i predisl. I.V. Kuz'mina, pod red. I.Yu. Krachkovskogo. St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1920.

A well-annotated translation with a good introduction, by a student of the renowned Russian Orientalist Ignatius Kratchkovsky, who edited the text prior to publication.

Ibn Tufail', Muxammad ibn Abd al-Malik, *Povest' o Xaie ibn Yakzane*, Perevod s arabskogo I.P. Kuz'mina. [Vstupitel'naya stat'ya, kommentarii i nauchnaya podgotovka teksta I.M. Fil'shtinskogo.] Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1978.

A revised reprinting of the Kuzmin translation, with a new introduction and commentary by I.M. Filshtinsky.

## SPANISH

*El filósofo autodidacto de Abentofail, novela psicológica*, traducida directamente del árabe por Francisco Pons Boigues, con un prólogo de Menéndez y Pelayo. Zaragoza: Comas hermanos, 1900.

A Castillian translation from Pococke's Arabic text, with an introduction by a leading Spanish literary historian and a translation of Ibn Sīnā's own *Ḥayy ibn Yaḳẓān*. This text was reprinted in Buenos Aires by the firm of Espasa-Calpe in 1954.

*Abentofail, el filósofo autodidacto (Risāla Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān)*, nueva traducción española, por Ángel González Palencia. Madrid: E. Maestre, 1934.

A first version of the authoritative Spanish translation, based on Gauthier's Arabic text of 1900. The introduction is useful for its emphasis on the Andalusian context and foundation in previous Spanish scholarship (usually ignored elsewhere); the textual notes mainly identify Qur'ānic quotations, but occasionally raise other valuable points. The engravings from the 1701 Rotterdam Dutch translation (but taken from Ockley's 1708 English translation) are also reproduced in this text.

*Abentofail, el filósofo autodidacto. Descartes, Discurso del metodo, Meditaciones metafísicas, Reglas para la dirección del espíritu.* Edición y notas preliminares de José Bergua. Madrid: Ediciones Ibéricas, 194–.

Ibn Ṭufayl (Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik), *El filósofo autodidacto (Risāla Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān)*, nueva traducción española, por Ángel González Palencia. Segunda edición. Madrid: Ediciones Jura, 1948.

A revised edition of this renowned Spanish scholar's 1934 translation, but still based on Gauthier's first edition of 1900.

*El filósofo autodidacto [Risāla Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-maš-riqiyya]*, Ibn Ṭufayl, traducción de Ángel González Palencia, edición de Emilio Tornero. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1995.

A reprinting of the second edition of the translation by González Palencia, revised according to the second edition of Gauthier's Arabic text, with a new introduction, a brief bibliography, and extensively revised notes to the translation. As in the previous versions of this translation, the Rotterdam 1701 engravings are reproduced from Ockley's 1708 English text. The introduction to this translation, now the best available in Spanish, discusses the life and thought of Ibn Ṭufayl and the sources and influence of *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*, and includes a brief bibliography of translations and studies of the text.

## TURKISH

A Turkish translation was apparently published by Baban Zadé Réschid in the periodical *Mihrab* in 1923.



## URDU

*Jītā jāgtā*, ya'nī Ibn Ṭufayl kay taṣnīf Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān kā urdū tarjama ma'a tabṣarah az Sayyid Muḥammad Yūsuf. Karachi: Anjuman-i taraqqī-yi urdū, 1955.

A lithographed translation with a long introduction on the author, his thought, the text, and its influence. The translation is accompanied by some explanatory notes.

*D. Modern Studies on Ibn Ṭufayl and his Work*

The following list includes all of the monographs and studies devoted or immediately relevant to Ibn Ṭufayl and *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* that have been cited in this volume, as well as others known to the editor but not cited in the papers. While it should be fairly full, it must once again be stressed that an exhaustive listing has not been attempted.

‘Abdul Ḥamīd, Khwāja. “The Philosophical Significance of Ibn Ṭufail’s Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān,” *Islamic Culture*, 22 (1948), pp. 50–70.

Adivar, Adnan. Art. “İbn Tufeyl,” in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, edited by Adnan Adivar et al. (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, etc., 1940–86), V.2, 829a–831a.

‘Allām, ‘Abd Allāh ‘Alī, *Al-Dawla al-muwahḥidīya bi-l-Maghrib fī ‘ahd ‘Abd al-Mu’min ibn ‘Alī* (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1971), pp. 361–64.

Anṭūn, Farah. *Falsafat Abī Ja’far ibn Ṭufayl, ustādh Muḥammad ibn Rushd al-‘azīm*. Cairo, 1904.

Arkoun, Mohammed. “Ibn Tufail ou le philosophie dans la cité almohade,” *Les Africains*, 6 (1977), pp. 261–87; reprinted in his *Pour une critique de la raison islamique: Islam d’hier et d’aujourd’hui* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1984), pp. 327–48.

Asín Palacios, Miguel. “El filósofo autodidacto,” *Revista de Aragón*, 1901; pp. 25–27, 57–60, 89–91.

Atkinson, Geoffrey, *The Extraordinary Voyage in French Literature before 1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1920), pp. 140–43.

Ayala, Jorge Manuel. “El Criticón de Gracián y el filósofo autodidacto de Abentofáil,” in *Gracián y su época: actas, ponencias y comunicaciones* (Zaragoza: Institucion Fernando el Católico, 1986), pp. 255–69.

‘Azzūz, Muḥyī l-Dīn. *Al-Taṭawwur al-madhhabī bi-l-Maghrib wa-dirāsāt qīṣṣa Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān*. Tunis: Al-Sharika al-tūnisīya li-l-tawzī’, 1976.

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- Badawi, 'Abdurrahmân, *Histoire de la philosophie en Islam* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1972), II, 718–35.
- Bayyūmī, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sāmī. "Al-Faylasūf Ibn Ṭufayl," *Majallat al-Azhar*, 12 (AH 1360), pp. 633–35.
- Bielawski, Józef. "Ḥajj ibn Jakzān, opowieść filozoficzna ibn Ṭufajla," *Przedlad orientalistyczny*, 20 (1956), pp. 443–60.
- . "Ibn Ṭufajl—arabski literat i poeta," *Przedlad orientalistyczny*, 40 (1961), pp. 451–75.
- . "Ibn Ṭufajl i jego powieść filozoficzna Ḥajj ibn Jakzān," *Przedlad orientalistyczny*, 18 (1956), pp. 141–50.
- de Boer, T.J., *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, translated by Edward R. Jones (London: Luzac, 1903), pp. 181–87.
- . Art. "Ibn Ṭufail" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908–26.), VII, 72b–74b.
- von Brockdorff, C.L.G.C. "Spinozas Verhältnis zur Philosophie des Ibn Tophail," *Veröffentlichungen der Hobbes-Gesellschaft (Ortsgruppe Kiel)*, 1 (1932), pp. 19–32.
- Brockelmann, Carl, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937–49), I, 460; II, 704; SII, 831.
- Bürgel, J. Christoph. "Ibn Ṭufayl and his Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān: a Turning Point in Arabic Philosophical Writing," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, edited by Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 830–46.
- Carra de Vaux, Bernard. Art. "Ibn Ṭufayl" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by M.T. Houtsma *et al.* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, London: Luzac, 1913–34), II, 424a–425b.
- . Art. "Ibn Ṭufayl" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, edited by H.A.R. Gibb *et al.*, III (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), p. 957a–b.
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- . "Al-Marrākushī on Ibn Ṭufayl's *De anima*: Fact or Fancy?," *Al-Qanṭara*, forthcoming.

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- , *Filosofía hispano-musulmana* (Madrid: Asociación española para el progreso de las ciencias, 1957), I, 369–418.
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